

THE RETURN OF GOD'S GLORY

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LIST OF CONTENTS

1	The Problem of Wastage	1
2	The Return of God's Glory	13
3	Worship and Fellowship	35
4	Building According to the Heavenly Plan	43
5	The True Levite	57
6	No Man Forbidding Him	72
7	The Christ of Glory	90
	Questions and Answers	98

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF WASTAGE

"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto them that had eaten." (John 6.12,13).

I want you to notice something about the "fragments" mentioned here. Why did the Lord give that command to the disciples to gather the fragments? The Lord Jesus Christ Himself went into the mountain, while the disciples got into the boat. But what happened to the fragments? It is quite possible that they were taken by the people of that multitude, to prove to their friends and loved ones at home, that they had been with the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they had received a blessing.

But my point this evening is, that our Lord does not like wastage; and that is why He commanded that nothing be lost. If He was so particular about those fragments left behind, how much more is He particular about our time, money and energy! When we look at our lives, we have to admit that much of our time is being wasted, much of our money is being mis-spent, and much of our energy is dissipated. Let us examine ourselves.

When I began my ministry in India in 1933, I thought I would please God by spending all the time I possibly could in giving the Gospel everywhere I went. I would begin early in the morning by filling my pockets with Gospels and tracts, and with books in my arms, I would go from shop to shop, street to street, person to person, and give them out freely. I would hold open-air meetings twice a

day, and cottage meetings every evening. I worked very hard. This went on for six months. But I saw no results. I consoled myself in thinking I had done my duty and in doing so had often missed my lunch and tea, but I was at a standstill. I was not growing spiritually. So when I prayed, "Lord, what is wrong with me?" the Lord showed me that I was serving Him in my own strength and wisdom, and that I was wasting time. He showed me how I had cut short my quiet time both morning and evening in order to be out serving. I repented of my negligence and determined that I would wait for the Lord's plan first before going out. I wanted to see fruit.

I had been praying for three hours, when the Lord told me that I was to go to "Soldiers' Bazaar". I called my friends and told them that God had given us the plan for the day, and that we were to go to Soldiers' Bazaar that day. They argued, "Do you know how far it is? It is four miles away . . . Now it is ten o'clock . . . It is the midday sup . . . Let us go tomorrow." I said, "No, God said I must go now—in Soldiers' Bazaar there is somebody waiting for the Lord".

There were no buses, so we walked. After an hour and a half we reached the place, and in an open space we began to sing and to preach. A man came out of his shop and said "Look here, I am a Mohammadan—this is my shop—and I will not allow you Christians to preach here". I told him that there was no compulsion and that he was accountable to God on the Judgement day, if he rejected Him. We moved on to another place, and began to sing and preach. Then came a policeman. He too refused us permission to stand there and preach.

Then I prayed, 'Lord, you sent us to Soldiers' Bazaar, but nobody wants us'. And again the Lord said, 'You go further'. We went further and had finished the message when a young Hindu came to me, who was a college graduate from the Punjab. I discovered that he had been going about searching for peace for the past four years. He had

gone on many pilgrimages to various parts of India, but was disappointed. He said "I was saying only yesterday, I wish I could meet some good Christian, who could help me. I know God has sent you here today."

The Lord gave us souls every day—not only one, but many, among the Sikhs and Hindus, as well as the Moham-madans. That is how God began to give me fruit. He expects us to see fruit.

The same principle applies in our use of money also. Do we misuse our money?

In the olden days, I would carry many coins in my pockets, because I was in the habit of giving to anyone who would ask me for money. But one day, when I gave, God spoke to me, and said, "It is not your money, it is Mine. Who are you to spend My money." From that day, I decided never to spend even one paisa without asking God's permission.

Your time and your money both belong to God. I never regard money as my own. I never buy anything until I am sure God has a purpose in my spending the money.

I remember in America I needed a hair-cut. I had the money, but the Lord never gave me any freedom to get it cut. I kept praying for three weeks, while my hair was getting very long.

I came to Minneapolis, and the Lord told me to go downstairs to the barbershop where I would get a good hair-cut. And while the barber was cutting my hair, I asked him, "Mr. Bruce, can you tell me whether you are born again?" He said, "No, but I want to be". So after he finished, I took my Bible and explained the way to him. He knelt down and accepted the Lord. He refused to give me the bill; so the Lord gave me a hair-cut and also the privilege to lead the barber to Himself.

I believe from God's Word that we will have to give account for our time and money.

The year 1936 was the beginning of a mighty move of the Spirit which took place in seven places in the Punjab. The first of these began in Pathankot. Even in the wake of such an ingathering of souls, God had more to teach me about waste.

In Pathankot, it was arranged that I should take five meetings. I agreed to do so, though I did not feel well. In fact, I had fever, headache and cough. When I came to my room that night, I was feeling very tired, and still quite sick; and so without much prayer I went to sleep. At midnight there was a very clear knock at the door. This knock I heard three different times, but no one answered my call. Then it occurred to me to pray, 'Lord tell me, what is it?' And the Lord answered me clearly, 'Get up and pray . . . Get up and pray'. I was so tired, but I got down and prayed. This went on for five nights. After the Sunday evening meeting, when the people were going home, I called them back and said, "I believe there is someone here who wants to give a testimony, and please feel free to give a word if God has spoken to you." A small girl of about 10 years stood and said very clearly and simply that the Lord Jesus Christ had met her and changed her, and forgiven her sins. Then the second and third, until about ten girls of the same age testified of how God had uncovered their sins, and how they were assured of His forgiveness. They all came from a Girls' School nearby.

A teacher of this Girls' School said to me. "Brother, this is too good to be true. Will you kindly pray that the blessing may continue!" As we began to pray, it seemed as though people were being beaten with a leather whip—they were crying out with tears for mercy. Others were hiding under chairs and benches—trembling! People were under conviction of sin.

This went on for some time. Then I asked, "How many here have never been born again?" About thirty to forty hands went up. "We are not going to go home until you are all born again"; I said. We went on praying and singing till

3 o'clock in the morning—the meeting had begun at 4 o'clock that afternoon. By that time others began to testify with shining faces what God had done for them.

This was the beginning of revival; and God continued to work in power in Patamalu, Sialkot, Montgomery and Sargodha. Then I had six days of meetings in Yangstadad, in the Punjab.

While there, a man from Martinpur, a place nearby, came and prevailed upon me to spend at least a day with them. It was a Christian village, and he wanted me to have some meetings there. I excused myself, and told him I was not free to go.

You see, I had heard of the bad reputation of this place, and the sinful state of the local church. There were about one hundred and ten families standing in opposition to the pastor; and about ninety-five families who were with him, and the remaining fifty-five were neutral—so there were three parties. One party would be having their service inside, while the other would be having a service outside the church building. And there would be someone appointed with a long stick to direct people into the right meeting! I understand that when certain members of the presbytery were sent to decide that dispute, they fell violently ill, and were suspected to have eaten poison. So they cleared out! I was terrified to go, and told him that it was not my job, and that he had better call someone who had some experience in those things. But in the end I went.

We had meetings in the open field for seven days, and people came, but mostly to ridicule. I saw their sin: making and selling liquor, kidnapping and selling girls—it was the worst kind of sin. I had seven sleepless nights, crying to God: 'O God, is there any hope for people like these?' I admit I was discouraged, and I told them that night standing in the field, "This is my last meeting—I am going away tomorrow."

We were having the last prayer, and as I was praying,

somebody suddenly fell on his face before me, as though he had been bitten by a scorpion. Then one after another, people were seen falling to the ground crying out for mercy. I saw with my own eyes, people throwing dust into their faces, beating their chests, and pulling on their hair. After three hours of this, the elders came beseeching me to stop it. I said, "I didn't start it . . . ask God to stop it".

This was the nature of the revival which spread from Punjab to Poona, Kedgaon, Indore, Mhow, Jhansi and in Agra. We saw hundreds come under conviction by the Spirit, confess their sins and be saved. We would stay for three to five weeks in each place having cottage meetings, Bible studies, and going out in processions selling gospels. But when I would return to those places after a few months, I would find to my great disappointment that a very small number were really going on with the Lord—the majority of them had gone back.

On seeing this, my first thought was: Whose fault is this? After all I am only an evangelist. I have given them the Gospel. I have done my duty. I have instructed them how to follow the Word. If the local people fail in their responsibility, they will have to give account to God! For some time I left others to carry on the work, even though people were sadly backsliding.

But God began to show me that as evangelists, we are not only responsible for their conversion, but also for their growth. Are they not our children, and if so, must we not be prepared to shepherd them? For all the teaching we had given, working hard in prayer and Bible study, we did not see much growth. There was wastage.

I had to acknowledge that I had failed them and that I was to blame. These people were truly born-again, and naturally they would look to us for guidance. We were responsible to lead them on and bring them into maturity and into the plan of God. I saw this truth very clearly from Ephesians 4.11-14.

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ . . . That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

I saw that many of the new converts were either deceived by wrong doctrine or by worldly attractions: or they were deceived by their relatives into marriages which led them away from God. But according to this passage of Scripture, it is the duty of apostles, prophets and evangelists and teachers to see that new converts are properly cared for and brought into maturity.

Until the year 1940 I was under the impression that our duty was just to preach the Gospel, and leave the results to others, as God might see fit to lead them. But this is not God's order and there is much waste if we ignore God's order.

Let us look again at Ephesians 4.8-12, because here we are made to understand clearly that God's burden is the Church in its full expression. The five-fold gifts are given by our Lord to the Church, and not just to a certain group. And it is our privilege to ask for these gifts. Just as we ask God to move in revival, so we must ask Him for blessings such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, which, when they function together, establish the believers on a strong foundation.

So I began to see that it was our fault that we were not seeing these gifts manifested among those who were being born again. We had not asked God for these gifts.

Apostles are given authority to establish churches, appointing those called of God for the work of the ministry.

Prophets are those who find the mind of God and declare it to the Church.

Evangelists have the main responsibility of preaching the Gospel, and bringing unbelievers to repentance and salvation.

Teachers reach people of all classes, and with patience, sympathy and kindness instruct them in the Word.

Pastors are like fathers and mothers, nurses and shepherds. They have the care and oversight of the flock of God.

All these gifts can only function effectively when they are together and not by themselves.

At first I was going about as an independent evangelist. There were about twelve in our party, and at that time we were staying in Coonoor. We had made plans to visit the tea estates with the Gospel. Everything was arranged, and we were about to go out when the Lord spoke to me again from I Corinthians 3.10.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

"Are you building on a strong foundation?" This is what God kept saying to me. So we had no campaign for over two months. We had been haphazardly praying: 'Lord, shew us Thy plan'. Now I can thank God how He has taught us, and how we are seeing people coming into maturity and exercising their gifts.

In Acts 11.19-26, we can see God's order for the Church slowly being revealed. It began at Antioch. Up till then the Gospel was preached to the Jews only. Strangers of Cyrene and Cyprus had come to Antioch and began to preach to the Grecians. The result was that a great number believed and turned to the Lord, because the Hand of the Lord was upon them.

The church in Jerusalem then sent Barnabas, who was reckoned one among the prophets and teachers, to go there. When he got there, he witnessed the grace of God working mightily. But we find Barnabas straightaway feeling the need for someone else to help him; so he went and brought Saul, an apostle, to labour with him in Antioch. However

mightily the work first began, it could not be established by itself. It needed the full function of the apostles, prophets and teachers; and we see from verse 27, that the prophets and the apostles were being brought together for the work of the Body of Christ.

There followed not only the famine, but also great persecution in Jerusalem. When Barnabas and Saul were sent by the church to bring relief to them, they discovered that James had been killed and Peter was in prison. The church was in continuous prayer for Peter that he might be delivered.

I can imagine both Saul and Barnabas joining in that prayer meeting—a wonderful prayer meeting! They must have been given a new revelation of the Church at prayer. Going back to Antioch, they were able to impart to the believers there this same burden for prayer.

From here there comes a change as we see in Acts 13.2,3. That is, the responsibility for guidance no longer belonged to Paul and Barnabas, nor were they left to govern themselves. Now the mind of God for Barnabas and Paul became the burden of the Church, and by the Holy Spirit was being revealed to the Church. It became the duty of the Church to pray, lay hands on them, and send them away for a ministry elsewhere.

How beautifully we see God's order carried out as we move on to see what happened in Acts 14.21-28. The apostles moved about from place to place, and men of every class were being raised up; and the apostles ordained elders in every church.

They did not return to Jerusalem, but to Antioch, because that was where God's order was first revealed, and that was where they were first "recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled." And when they were come, they gathered the church, and rehearsed all that God had done.

So, in spite of persecution, trials and hardships, the churches were established. They were not depending upon human qualifications or directions, but upon the Holy Spirit.

Whenever we want to come into God's plan, the devil will fight fiercely. We find evidence of this in Exodus 32.1-8, when God in the Mount was giving Moses the pattern of the Tabernacle. The people fell into sin and rebelled by making themselves other gods.

When God performed miracles, the devil was quiet, but when God was showing His heavenly pattern, the devil was furious.

Now the devil seeks to prevent us and attack us when we come into the heavenly plan. He will not mind if we go on doing what we think is best. It is only when we want to work God's perfect order, that the devil will create difficulties which are hard to overcome.

I have seen so many new converts go astray because they have never come into church-life. They have been fathered by a few persons only. None of us can bear this burden alone. God has given this burden to the Church.

Now I would like you to see the example given in Revelation 1.10-16. As you know, the book of Revelation is a message given by the Lord Jesus Christ to John the apostle. About A.D. 95, John, now an aged man of God, was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

As an apostle he was downcast as he saw the persecuted people of God scattered, and remembered the many who were killed. He was puzzled and questioned: "Lord what next? If so many of Thy chosen apostles are in prison, what is going to happen to Thy Church?"

Then, on the Lord's Day, as John was praying in the Spirit, he heard a Voice from behind; and he turned round to see who was speaking.

Why did not the Lord

stead of from behind him? This is my question: Was it not because John was looking in the wrong direction? That is no doubt why he became discouraged. And the Lord Jesus was saying to John: 'John, you are looking in the wrong direction; turn round, and get a new perspective'.

The first thing John saw was the seven golden candlesticks. You might think that he should see the Lord Jesus Christ first. But no! In verses 12 and 13 we are told that he saw the seven golden candlesticks first, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in a high-priestly garment, walking in the midst of the candlesticks. It is as if the Lord were saying: 'John, if you want to see Me walking and working, you can only see it in My Church. You will not see Me through signs and miracles; but you will see Me in My Church'.

The Lord is not building denominations. He is not building societies. He is not building a group, or a fellowship. *He is building His Church.*

Believers must be warned again and again about denominational practices, rites, customs and traditions. They bring blindness. They do not make us aware of the purpose of God in saving us, and making us one family, and one Church. He wants us to be one Church, and not just a few scattered believers.

On the Lord's Day, we gather at the Lord's table, and our attention is fixed upon the Lord. We worship *Him*. We uphold *Him*. And yet, among the denominations, this very same table is the means of contention, and quarrels and strife!

We must ourselves know what the Church is, before we can be on Church-ground. There are very few Christians in England and America who pray for their missionaries; a few individuals may, but the church has no burden to pray for those who are sent out from them. They will give any amount of money, and they will send parcels at Christmas time; but they cannot find time to pray for them, and that is why you find so many missionaries on the foreign field

being attacked by the devil. Some may pray generally: "Lord, watch over them, protect them, and give them good health, and supply their needs." But they cannot realize how many tricks the devil uses to attack them. The devil comes very subtly, because he knows they are exposed.

We have to come on Church-ground to be protected from the Enemy's attack. Spiritual power and fulness is in the Church (Eph.1.22,23). It is the Church which shows God's manifold wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph.3.10). The power to bind Satan is given to the Church (Matt.18.19). As a Church we can rebuke and bind Satan; and that is why we need a *praying Church* behind us!

We see from Scripture that in the end days, the devil will be more furious against God's servants, and I feel very strongly that we must endeavour to remain on Church-ground, otherwise we are bound to be divided and our labour wasted.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RETURN OF GOD'S GLORY

"The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken." (1 Sam. 4.22).

"Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices: and the glory of the Lord filled the house." (2 Chron. 7.1).

In the first sentence, we read that the glory was departed from Israel: and in the second we see that the fire came down from heaven and the glory of the Lord filled the house.

There are certain divine principles according to which God works. His glory is seen only when we are willing to abide by those principles.

In Exodus 40 we see how the glory came by the fulfilling of those divine principles. In verses 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32 and 33 we read this phrase: - "As the Lord commanded Moses." And in the last verse, "So Moses finished the work." Then in Exodus 40.34, "And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

That fragment, "As the Lord commanded Moses" is repeated as if the Lord Himself was examining the whole work which had been done, and He was fully satisfied in every small detail. It is only when the work is finished according to God's standard that the Glory comes down. That is how the Bible defines the descent of the glory of God.

See what our Lord Himself says in John 4.34, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." It is only when a work is finished according to God's

perfect revealed will, and according to His heavenly plan, that at His command the *Glory comes down*.

Just the mere manifestation of some power or miracle or sign is *not* God's glory. It is a finished and complete work, done according to His command and order, which brings down the *full Glory* of God.

How can we prove that God's glory is among His people? First, let us look at Numbers 7.89.

"And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and He spake unto him."

From the day that God's glory had filled the tabernacle He began to speak from between the cherubim, from above the mercy seat. God had spoken to Moses before, from the burning bush: He spoke to him when He called him, on the Mount, and there He gave him the whole law and the pattern for the tabernacle. But now we find this speaking is different altogether. From now onward God began to open His heart to Moses to reveal His whole mind, from between the cherubim.

Here we get the proof that God's glory was amongst His people. God was speaking and He was making His mind clear to all those that came to Him. It was the privilege of anybody among all the twelve tribes that for his personal or family problems or for any other matter concerning the congregation, he could go to Aaron, the high priest, and find out the mind of God and the will of God.

Then Aaron would go to God and hear Him speaking from between the cherubim above the mercy seat. God speaking is the one great proof that God's glory is among His people.

Secondly, let us read Numbers 9.15-23. "The cloud covered the tabernacle". This is the second great proof that

God was with them in His full glory. Their eyes were constantly upon the cloud resting upon the tent of the congregation. Whether the cloud lifted in the morning or midday, or evening, or midnight, the children of Israel moved only when the cloud lifted. When the cloud tarried for a day or a week or a month or a year or even longer, they had to stay; they could not move, but whithersoever the cloud went, they had to go. By these two great signs we know that God's glory was dwelling amongst His people.

Now we find in 1 Samuel 4.22 that the glory departed. There were many causes responsible for that; and because of these causes, these people of God lost their privileges one by one. The time came at last when God had to leave them—for a while.

Let us consider a few of the causes that were responsible for the spiritual decline of the people. Judges 21.25, "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The first great cause of their failure and their barrenness was that "everyone did that which was right in his own eyes."

In 1 Samuel 2.12-17 we see a second cause of failure. These sons of Eli the high priest, began to despise the sacrifices; and not only that, they began to use force. We are told in verse 13 that they had with them a fleshhook of three teeth, to take away the flesh which was meant for God.

Nowadays, the very same thing is happening through fleshhooks of three teeth: that is, the honour that ought to be given to God is being given to man because of (a) Love for money; (b) Love for power; and (c) Love for fame.

These are the three great teeth which are being used now by many people. Many people do serve God, no doubt; but you find in their heart of hearts, either they have love for money, love for power, or love for fame. They will make any sacrifice, if only they can satisfy their desire for power, or money, or name!

Also, we find that Eli knew all this! Yet he would not rebuke his sons. That is why God had to punish him so severely. See further in 1 Samuel 3.13: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

He knew it. Nothing was hidden from him. No doubt he did tell them, "This is not right!" but as the margin says, "He did not frown upon them, nor did he rebuke them." As high priest, it was his duty; and when he found corruption going on in the house of God, he ought to have strongly rebuked his sons. But he did not frown upon them, nor rebuke them. For this cause, we find that the glory departed from the house of God, and from Israel.

Then we see in 1 Samuel 4.1-6 that Eli knew that his sons were living in sin, and yet he permitted them to carry the ark into the battlefield.

These are a few of the causes responsible for the barrenness and death found in those days among God's people. First of all, we see that every man thought that whatever he did, was right! That is how the downfall began.

Secondly, when Eli knew that corruption had come into the house of God, rather than firmly rebuking and punishing his children, he politely scolded them: "Please don't do it. It is not good for you." It is like saying to a thief, "Mr. Thief, don't steal—it is not good for you." Would he ever listen to you? So God had to say to Eli that He was going to judge his house once and for all!

Then we see the evil of these young men in that they carried the ark. They were not only heedless and careless about what they were doing in the house of God, but they were presuming to be leaders of Israel, in carrying the ark!

In the same way today, we find so many ungodly men of wealth, position and ability holding responsible positions in the churches and where God's work goes on! and *that is why the glory has departed* from among the people of God.

Whatever the condition was in those days, you find the very same nowadays throughout the world, we have to acknowledge that the glory has departed. Look around the churches in India, America, Canada, Europe or in any other part of the world, you will agree that this is true God's glory has departed! God's Word has become precious, or rare! In very few places are people receiving good sermons and good teaching. They acquire a good head-knowledge of the Scripture, but there are very few places where God's message is given in simplicity; where people say, "Hear ye what God says—this is His message!"

And in those days, we read, God's Word became precious. They had the privilege of receiving God's Word from the high priest, but he also became spiritually deaf, dull and dumb. God's message was not being given to him. The people also became blind, and relied upon their own wisdom and judgement in the work of God!

We find everywhere these days that these hooks of three teeth are used by those who call themselves the servants of God. Leave aside modernists and those who are the people of the world, even among the so-called fundamentalists, we find the love for power and fame is there. That is why they have to use force, appeal, and other cunning in advertising. They glorify man in their love for name, or power or money.

It gives me a shock when I see servants of God begging for money.

Once in America, I heard a man, a good man, making an appeal for money. He said: "Friends, we have arranged a banquet for young people; and we are expecting ten thousand young people. This is an opportunity to give them God's Word. But we want ten thousand dollars within two days; and unless you give liberally, we are going to be in a hole".

Now you find almost all Americans in a 'hole' these days. They have to beg for money. They beg through letters, reports, and other means. They beg, and get what they beg for.

No one is justified in begging because it is God's work for which they are asking money. We believe in a living God, and preach a living God! If God can forgive sins, He also can supply needs.

One day on the train, I saw a Hindu lady in the same compartment. She said to me, "How can God meet your needs? You say that you don't belong to any society, how can God meet your needs?" I said, "Tell me, do you believe as I told you before, that God forgave my sins? I gave you my testimony of how I struggled hard and tried to get my sins forgiven by every possible means. I was prepared to spend any amount of money and go anywhere to find someone who could forgive my sins. But nobody could. The day came when I heard these words clearly, 'My son, thy sins be forgiven thee'. I can tell you again and again that the Lord Jesus Christ forgave my sins more than thirty years ago; now can you tell me that your sins are forgiven?" She said, "No, I can't say that—I wish I could say so." I said, "Well, if you believe God forgave my sins, is it difficult for Him to supply my needs? The whole amount of the world's money could never have taken away my sins—they were so many. If you believe God can forgive a sinner, it is very easy to believe that the same living God can supply all my needs. I believe it. I know it also by experience".

We do not have to ask for money; to do so is lack of faith. If we are God's servants, God will not fail His servants.

Sometimes it is not money, but fame that men are seeking. They want a big report, so that people will say, "What a great work is being done by so-and-so!"

Is it in a desire for fame, that we are working?

Now what was the condition in those days? Outwardly they were doing the service of the house of God, but all the time they were grabbing the things of God, and robbing God of His glory. Thus the glory was departed from among God's people.

I have come across so many of God's servants, who have

told me very sadly. "Why is it, brother? We work so hard; we are fundamentalists; we believe in God's Word; we live a simple life; why can't we see God's glory?" *The glory has departed.*

However, we read also in God's Word that the same glory which departed, came back. We see this in 2 Chronicles 7.1. God not only tells us of our failure; but He also has a remedy for everything. God exposes sin in very plain language; there is no book in the world which uncovers and exposes sin in the language that the Bible does!

How horrible and terrible is sin! God uncovers it, but He also has a remedy for it!

Now we find that as we read the six books from the first book of Samuel through to the end of second Chronicles, we come across the names of four people who play a very important part in bringing back that departed Glory.

The first is Hannah, the second is Samuel, the third is David, and the fourth is Solomon. In the six books we find that these four characters play a very big part in bringing back the departed glory. As we go along we shall see how these four names speak of four divine principles. In fulfilling these principles we shall find God's departed glory coming into our hearts, into our assemblies, and into our work.

Let us see how these four principles can help us individually and collectively, as God's servants, that God's glory may return. First of all turn to 1 Samuel 1.2. The name Hannah means grace. Even though this woman had a very good name, she was in great sorrow, she was being constantly provoked by Peninnah. In verses 4-7 we find Hannah in sorrow, in pain, and being constantly hurt. Peninnah kept sarcastically saying to her, in order to hurt her, "You are barren—it is God's curse upon you!"

We are told that as Hannah was being so sorely provoked she went and fasted and prayed, yet it seemed that God did

not hear her prayer. So she continued weeping, and went on praying with faith.

Now Hannah was a godly woman--a far better woman than the other. Then why did God remain silent to her prayer? It was surely for a purpose.

In the beginning Hannah was praying only for her own need: "Lord I am barren, meet *my* need, take away *my* barrenness. Lord, look upon *me* and *my* affliction and *my* barrenness and *my* condition and *my* sorrow, and save *me* from the reproach of *my* neighbours." All her tears were for *her* need. She did not know that God could also have some *need*. Then her prayer changed; "Lord, now I forsake my own selfish need and promise that if you give me a man-child, he will be lent back to Thee".

Somehow, when she discovered God's need, God answered her prayer and gave her a son.

Many of us pray like Hannah did: "Lord, we are barren, take away our barrenness. Lord, we are empty, please fill us. Lord, we see no fruit for our labours; send a revival!"

Many prayers are being offered throughout the world for revival, some praying for a whole night, others for a whole week, others still, praying with fasting, but still no answer. Why? Our prayers are selfish, we go by our own conception of how God must work. God must work in this, or that way we think. "Lord, you must work in this plan and meet our need in this way", we pray.

We ask: "Lord take away our barrenness, give us more fruit; let us see Thy power in our midst, more and more!" But God does not answer our prayers! Why? Because we have not yet discovered God's need. Yes, we have a need indeed, but what about God? Unless we find God's need, we cannot expect God to work!

We take a lot for granted. We say, India is poor, and we must keep asking for money for India. Are you sure about that? That is not God's way of working! We must not take

for granted that because people are in poverty, they must be given money. Sometimes tragedies and floods are His judgements. We have no right to interfere in God's work. Even though we should spend the whole of the world's wealth, we can never remove poverty and sickness from the earth!

We as God's servants must find out what God's need is today. What is God's need in India, north India, or south India? What is God's need in Africa, in Europe, or in America? We must find this out by prayer. Don't go by the assumption that because God worked in a certain place so many years ago, that He must do the same there again today! This is only our own idea! That is why our prayers are left unanswered.

I believe we learn in Hannah how to pray. Even though Hannah prayed with fasting, and tears, and with faith; even though she was a sincere, godly woman; nevertheless, God did not hear her prayer. He waited till she understood His need! You, too, may be thinking: "Why is God so silent? He knows the value of man's life. Why does He allow this or that to happen and go on for years?"

God has His own way of working. He wanted a man, for He cannot work without a man. He wanted a man who was given to Him willingly, and for that He waited.

A similar case we see in Elijah, in 1 Kings 19 1-4. He was very sure that because God had sent fire, as recorded in 1 Kings 18.38, surely now He must again send fire. Is not Jezebel a wicked queen? And does she not deserve to be punished? So the prophet was very positive that God would punish this woman, for she deserved it, she had threatened to take the life of God's servant. But nothing had happened! Elijah began to despair when he saw that God was taking no action. He said in effect: "Now Lord, I resign my office as a prophet, and give Thee an hour's notice. From today I refuse to be Thy prophet. What is the use of serving Thee? This wicked woman wants to kill me and *you are asleep!*"

But God was so gracious. He was not sleeping, but He was not going to punish Jezebel in the wisdom of Elijah! He had already planned that He would use Jehu to punish her, and not Elijah.

That was God's way. Now my point is, that we have no right to dictate to God; He has ways that are higher than our ways, and we can safely wait for Him.

What about God's purpose in the matter of Hannah? God was waiting very patiently, and He was pleased to choose Hannah to be His partner. He permitted that barrenness in the life of Hannah to make her a true partner of God. What an honour to be given to Hannah! She had been praying: "Lord, take away my reproach"! God was saying, "Hannah, what about My need? My name is also being reproached".

That is why we also fail; because we are more concerned about our mission, our name, our reputation, and our depression even, than we are for God's Name. Many of our prayers are for ourselves only! 'Lord, do a new work in our midst, in our group', we pray. God does not work in that way. We must learn how to pray in order to find God's need or what He is after. If we want God's glory to come down, we must first of all learn how to pray thus: for we find that before every true revival, there has been first of all a great burden for prayer.

Go to Ireland, Wales, Assam or to any other part of the world where there has been revival, and you will find that it was a prayer revival, first of all. They began to cry everywhere for revival, praying day and night; not only for themselves, but also for the whole world. They were praying that God would have His way, for the first principle is to pray according to God's will; seeking to find His mind and His need.

Please do not assume that you are the only person responsible to take the Gospel to the whole world! Are you sure that God has given this job to you? Read Matthew 28, 19, 20, and you will see that this commandment is given to

all believers. God has not given the monopoly to any one nation or people. We may be wealthy and educated; but we cannot say that because we have more money, or more education that it is our special privilege to evangelize the whole world. Unless we make every believer a strong witness for the Lord and preach the whole church's responsibility to evangelize, the job is impossible. *It won't happen!*

Why did God not allow the Jews to evangelize the world? They were a more gifted people; they had their apostles; and yet you see that God passed by the Jews, and He came to Antioch (Acts 13.2). You would think that the Great Commission would have been given to the apostles at Jerusalem. They are the first people who should be sent out to other parts of Europe to evangelize. But not so. God in His own sovereign way chose Antioch as His centre. The centre shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch. What about today's command? Can we very truthfully say that we spend hours in prayer till we know God's mind? Or are we taking it for granted that this must be God's plan? *Hannah teaches us the principle of prayer.* She learned how to pray, in order to know God's will.

"And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by the Word of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3.21).

This is the second divine principle which has to be fulfilled if we want God to send His glory into our midst, if we are going to allow God to reveal Himself. We need the fearless, faithful witness of men like Samuel. We have good Bible teachers, and many scholars who can write very good books and some very good preachers also but not many Samuels.

We want men of God, men who are actually the mouth-piece of God; men who can boldly and freely say: 'Hear ye what God saith' and 'Thus saith the Lord'.

God's Word came to Samuel as a small boy. God first told him, "You go and tell Eli". How could he, a small boy,

go to an old man, his master, and give him God's message? But even though it was a difficult and terrible message, he obeyed God and gave it.

We find that there are very few people who are prepared to give God's message. We think we have to be so polite and diplomatic in what we say, so that no one knows what we are talking about!

There was a man in England, known as Lord Asquith, a very fine speaker, and with a fine command of language. Yet he spoke in such a way, that no one knew what his views were!

Some years ago, I was in Ahmedabad. One Saturday night I began to pray for God's message. Very clearly God spoke to me saying: "You have to speak on the blood of Christ tomorrow morning". I said, "Lord, I will do it on Monday, because there is one leading person on the committee who is a staunch member of the Oxford Group". There were pastors and missionaries as well as myself invited to dinner on this occasion. I said, "Lord, if I give that message they will be so angry that they may even cancel the dinner; so let me have the dinner, and I will give the message on Monday". But God would not leave me! So when the time came, I gave what God had given to me and that day they gave me no food! They were so angry with me that they left me without any food the whole evening.

The third day, the same person came to me. I asked, "Are you a member of the Oxford Group?" "Yes", he answered. "And why were you so angry with me?" I asked. He said, "Because you spoke those things so bluntly". I said, "Don't you believe in perfect love? Is this not one of the rules of the Oxford Group, to love your enemies? And if I be your enemy, you must love me also. You invited me here yourself, and I accepted your invitation: why don't you love your enemy?"

He saw the point—that he needed practice and not only theory. They all repented, and the Lord saved them.

Now unless we give God's message at the proper time, the enemy will gain ground. We have a desire to be very polite lest we lose a chance to speak again. We reason this way: If I give God's full message they will never ask me again. Does it matter? It doesn't matter. Are we here just to be popular speakers, or do we want to be God's messengers with God's message? God wants a man who will be His mouthpiece, who will not be afraid of any man's face. I feel that in these days there is a serious need for a man like Samuel.

Before the work began in Madras, I prayed for a whole month, and God would not speak to me. I fasted too, but still no answer came. One night, I said, 'Lord, I promise Thee I will pay the price, even though I get no more invitations to speak anywhere, I don't care!' I had been saying 'Lord, now I have four hundred invitations for campaigns in India, Burma and Ceylon. See Lord, there is an open door in every part of India—they are all asking me for meetings. I can go anywhere now with the message and somebody else can do the follow-up'. But God would give me no message. Now I prayed, 'Lord, I will be satisfied even if you keep me in one lonely place. I don't want big campaigns, I only want to be sure I am in Thy will. Nothing else will satisfy me.' When I said that, like a flash God spoke to me, "Behold, I make a covenant, I will do marvels". And from that day He gave me more than seventy verses of assurances of how He would work.

I believe with all my heart that unless we are men like Samuel, we will not see God's power fully manifested. He may use us, but not fully; He may bless us, but not fully; He may work among us, but not deeply; unless we are men like Samuel, and God's Word can come and go out freely as He gives it.

In 1 Samuel 13:5-14, we see how God used Samuel when His people were in trouble. Reading this passage, you will agree by human reasoning that Saul was justified in his action.

Their enemies had gathered in large numbers; and all Saul's men were trembling in fear. Samuel had said that he could come within seven days. But they could not wait. Saul had waited seven full days but still Samuel did not come; so he then forced himself to offer a sacrifice, which he had no right to do. He ignored the law of God. He knew full well that he had no business to offer a sacrifice. That was Samuel's job, not his. So Samuel had to rebuke Saul and at great cost.

Many of us may demand that God must work, or answer our prayer within a certain period, perhaps within seven days. God will not work according to our plan. In the first place, it was God that delayed Samuel in coming. We do not know the details; but God was evidently proving and testing Saul. He wanted to show Saul what was in man's heart; and also that a man like Samuel would implicitly obey God.

When we find the enemies coming against us like Saul did, and when we find things becoming very difficult to bear, we often go against the mind of God. Our argument may be. It is the work of God—it must not suffer for want of money. Now we have prayed with faith for so many months and no money has come in. So let us go and beg for it!

Even in groups who begin on a faith basis I find they have started begging and giving many hints for money. Why is it? Because the work is great?

'In the olden days there was not so much work', we say; 'but now with so many missionaries throughout the world, the work has grown great. We must have more money and thus there is no harm in begging for it.'

Can God not work today? Why did Samuel delay his coming? At God's command, he delayed. God may delay in sending help for some time. We cannot change the divine principle—faith means faith! If we say we have faith—it must be living faith.

Now Saul knew full well that God was going to deliver them through Samuel. This was not the first time God had worked such a miracle. Saul knew that Samuel was God's prophet and that in the Name of God he would defeat the enemy, and not by their own strength. But the people trembled and were so frightened when Samuel delayed to come, that Saul forced himself, and offered the sacrifice.

Now we want men like Samuel, that whenever God's people depart from the truth, whenever they are acting against God's Word, God's servant will have courage to say: 'You are wrong, brother; do not depart from your first vision'.

We find that God has prophets, and even today, through His prophets His mind is revealed, and we must obey His word even though it may be hard and faithful.

In 1 Samuel 15, 23-31 and 16, 1, you will see that Samuel had to say a hard thing to King Saul: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He also hath rejected thee from being king."

You will see also from these verses that Saul shed tears over his sin, so much so, that Samuel, even though he was a prophet of God, mourned for him and pleaded to God for him. But it was of no use. God had refused him!

You have very false hopes if you think you will bring reformation among the denominations. You may argue about it as much as you like.

Let us learn the lesson God wants to teach us in this passage: His command to Saul had been to destroy the enemy utterly but Saul had spared Agag and the choice of the flock and thus he failed God.

God had to refuse Saul for two great failures. Firstly, he changed God's order for sacrifice. Secondly, he gave partial obedience to His command.

The very same thing is happening also among the people of the denominations—a continual change of God's order.

They think that there is no harm in having some human way in their church life.

For example, it is entirely unscriptural to appoint elders by vote. They all know that by having elections in their system they bring strife in the churches. It begins by election. One party wins, the other party loses. How can we justify that practice when we know it is unscriptural. Also, in this way, ungodly men are elected to hold offices!

That is why God does not work fully in these groups. There can be blessing; no doubt God can use them to save souls, and spread the Gospel. But He cannot fully bless them. In the same way God allowed Saul to remain as king for some time; but he was no longer really His anointed vessel.

And Samuel began to weep, being an old man. He felt sorry for him, and he must have prayed: 'Lord, please forgive him—forgive Saul. I know he has done wrong; but he had done good also'. But God said to him, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?" (16.1).

You may think that by giving some co-operation to the denominations, you can bring more light and help to them. It will never work. You may see some blessing but you will never see God's glory, as the Scriptures show.

We see further what God was looking for. He wanted the people to come to His full glory. He not only wanted them to overcome the Philistines, which would be for only a short time, but He had a far greater plan for Israel as a nation. They must be brought into their full inheritance in Canaan, and they must see God working fully in their midst. This was God's purpose. God wants men after His own heart, and even Samuel himself had to learn this lesson.

In 1 Samuel 16.2,3 he said: "If Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, I will show thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto Me him whom I name unto thee."

Here is another reason why God wanted Samuel—that

God's anointed vessel might be found. Even though Samuel wanted by human wisdom to give Saul one more chance, God refused it. God wants those whom He has called and prepared for a particular service. And you are not likely to find this happening in a group who depend upon election—they only want the persons of their preference to be the ones appointed for this or that.

Now please note verse 4: "And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?"

Why did the elders tremble at the coming of Samuel? He did not go with a sword or a stick. He was not going to say what they thought he was going to say. He would say what God told him, for he was a man of God—God's prophet. And whatever they had done wrong, it would be uncovered by his coming. This is why they were trembling. If we had men like Samuel, we would find this type of thing happening today and men would be trembling. But while we remain so careful and so diplomatic and so cautious of every word, lest we hurt someone, we will not see anything happening—there will be no conviction! Samuel was a man of God who brought conviction wherever he went. He went peaceably; yet, *men trembled*.

Let us look further at verses 6 and 7 of the same chapter where we are shown the divine principle of choosing leaders: "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance. But the Lord looketh on the heart."

In the work of the Lord we have to be very, very careful never to be governed by nationality, nor by appearances of any kind.

Now it is possible that you have appointed a man as leader of your mission, who has never been called of God—and now you are paying the price for it! You may have said, "He is a very nice man, a qualified man, let him be our

leader, preacher or co-worker", but you have gone only by outward appearance--*not by God's choice.*

The third name is David, illustrating the third divine principle--the necessity for God's order. In I Samuel 16.12-14, even though the Lord had departed from Saul, yet we see that God allowed him to continue as king for a while, so that David also might be properly prepared.

In 1 Samuel 30.1-4 we read of the tragic way in which David was overcome by the Amalekites at Ziklag. David and his men all began to weep until they had no power left to weep. Why? Because their wives and their children were taken captive; and their houses and possessions were burned--what a great loss! Now it is generally the privilege of women to weep. They weep on the roadside, bus, on the train--anywhere. But a man does not weep. If a man should weep on the roadside, it is considered strange. Here we find that David and all his men were weeping. This shows what a very great loss there was to recover!

This loss was the result of David's own failure. He had failed to consult God before he joined the army of the Philistines.

The time came when the Philistines joined battle against Israel (1 Samuel 29). David saw in this an opportunity to avenge himself on Saul; so he decided to join the Philistines in battle too, saying to himself, 'He is my enemy; he has tried to kill me; I have waited so long for this chance; let me go against Saul'. Though he knew full well that God would not allow him to touch Saul, he impatiently joined the Philistines, not waiting to find God's will as he had done at other times. But he failed, and he and his men suffered great loss.

In verse 8 we see David enquiring after God. God forgave him and told him to "pursue, overtake them, and without fail, recover all". David pursued, and not only recovered all but found such great spoil that he was able to pay his debts to all his men; and send gifts to the elders in Judah.

But God himself dealt with Saul without the help of David. We see in 1 Samuel 31.1-6 that Saul's end came when the battle of the Philistines went sore against him, and Saul died. David had no need to go against him. God had this in His own control.

My point is, that we do not have to go and fight against people—using carnal weapons!

2 Samuel 24.1-4; 13-17 gives the second occasion when David incurred a loss. He fell into temptation by numbering the people. He knew full well that all the battles had been fought and won because of the power of God, and not by the strength of his army; but because of his pride, he wanted to assure himself that he had a very large army behind him.

The result was that God had to punish him, and 70,000 of his men were killed. He was about to wipe out Jerusalem, but He stayed His hand when David confessed his sin on the threshing floor of Araunah: "Lo I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me". Then God forgave him, and the very same site became the site for the temple God wanted to be built.

In the same way many have failed. They argue: 'We must have more money, more power, more men, more knowledge'. In that way they have changed God's plans, but they cannot defeat the enemy by any human strength or resources.

In 2 Samuel 11.1 we see that David becomes a murderer, because of his failure to obey God's Word and go on duty. That was David's third loss.

David tarried at Jerusalem and was tempted and became an adulterer, and afterwards a deceiver. He repented sincerely, but God had to humble him.

To make him humble, God even permitted in David's life these temptations. In God's work we have to be extremely humble and broken. So whenever we are going through

a testing time, remember, it is that God may make us humble vessels.

In 1 Chronicles 13.1-11 we see God dealing with David the fourth time. David should have known that the ark of God was to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites, and not taken in a cart; yet in human wisdom he ignored the divine order. The Philistines had returned the ark of God in a new cart, and David began to imitate the Philistines, so God became angry.

All Israel came with great zeal, singing and dancing and with harps, to take the ark to the city of David, but the whole procedure was against God's will. David thought that by having a very grand procession, and a military hand, it would please God. But they entirely ignored the revealed plan of God. The Ark must be borne by the Levites. It must be carried on their shoulders. So God's judgement fell, and then David feared God.

Now when David returned to God's order in bringing back the ark, there was great joy. It was then that David wrote that wonderful psalm in 1 Chronicles 16.7-36.

Maybe we have the same temptation that David had. He thought that by making some change he would make a better impression. But in God's work, we can never change God's order. Whatsoever has been revealed in the Bible is to be followed, for every period of time, for every worker and for every group. *You cannot change it.*

When you are tempted and make some change, there always comes loss.

Afterwards when David returned to God's ways, God gave him the pattern and the plan for the temple. He did this on two separate occasions; but only after he was delivered from his human wisdom.

We think that we are living in different days; but I can see from God's Word clearly that unless we follow the heavenly pattern in our day, we cannot see God coming in

His full glory. Sometimes we have to be brought on the 'threshing floor' because, in God's work, we are depending far too much on human wisdom and cleverness; but we cannot make any improvement on the heavenly plan.

Now let us consider Solomon illustrating the fourth divine principle to ensure God's glory. "And the house when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings 6,7).

This was a very unique building. There is no building in the world which can be built without a sound; but there was no need for any sound at all in this building, because every stone fitted in so beautifully according to God's plan.

When you follow God's plan in your individual life, and family and church life, you will find unity, co-operation, openness, fellowship, and spiritual joy in living together. Otherwise there is strife. When we have God's plan, and we know our ministries, there will not be any jealousy. Much work has suffered because of jealousy.

I remember in one place we were having a meeting. I found it very hard going that day in the meeting. When I came back to my room, I asked the Lord, "What is it that made it hard?" The Lord spoke to me and showed me that it was my prayer-partner that was at fault. So I called him and said, "Brother, tell me why was it so difficult today?" He said, "I am very sorry to confess to you, but I felt very jealous of you while you were speaking".

Even as God's servants, we can be jealous of each other, and it brings loss. There is no doubt about it; we may have to pray for a whole night or longer to make sure of God's mind. And then we find oneness.

When the work of building was complete, we read in 2 Chronicles 7.1 that there was great joy that day, because the glory of the Lord filled the house! For 140 years God had

waited. He loved His people, rebuked them, and chastised them, till they came into His heavenly order, and then the glory came down.

In conclusion, let me bring these four things before you again. First, we acknowledge that the glory is departed. We confess our barrenness, and our fruitlessness—that we are not receiving God's Word today, as we ought to receive it. "Lord, make me like Hannah, that knowing Thy need, I can learn how to pray, and have the privilege of meeting that need—as Hannah did, when she offered her son to the Lord".

"Lord, make me like Samuel—Thy true mouthpiece that I may know Thy message and have Thy authority and boldness to give that message".

"Lord, give us men like David; men after Thine own heart, who will be completely free from worldly wisdom: and who can receive Thy pattern".

In David we see God's plan for the Church emerging, when God revealed to him the heavenly plan for the temple. Before God could give David the plan, He had to chastise him; He had to punish him, cleanse him, change him, humble him, empty him completely of human wisdom. So in David we are made Church conscious; in Solomon we are made God conscious.

"Lord make me like Solomon—a man of peace—building God's temple by living stones fitly joined together by unity and openness".

Our Lord prays in John 17.21-24 for a four-fold oneness: "that they may be one, as We are", oneness in relationship; "that they may be made perfect in one", oneness in perfection; "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them", oneness in love; "and the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them", oneness in glory.

It is only by such oneness that we can finally see God's glory coming down.

CHAPTER THREE

WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

"Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon the rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day". (Acts 27.29).

You all know that this storm at sea took place when Paul the apostle was a prisoner and was being taken to appear before Caesar at Rome. They were in great danger because of the storm. So for their protection, they finally cast forth four anchors from the boat.

The Christian life is like a journey in a sea—full of storms. There are storms in the house, storms in the family, storms in the neighbourhood, and there are storms in the country round about. All of these try to shake and weaken our faith, with doubts and fears. But God knowing our need, has made provision for us, and given us four anchors. By these we can be perfectly safe. We see from Acts 2.41,42 what these four anchors are which God has provided for every believer:

"Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

That is how the work began on the day of Pentecost. God's Word was preached in power and authority by these men of God.

That Word began to prick those who heard it. They believed straightaway and were found obedient to the Word given to them. Then there were 3,000 souls added unto

them. At the very same time they were given these four anchors we have mentioned, as found in verse 42. They began and continued first of all in the apostles' doctrine, secondly in fellowship, thirdly in the breaking of bread, and fourthly in prayer.

And these four anchors were a protection against the onslaughts of the Evil One for those early believers. We see from the whole book of Acts how the enemy came in like a flood in an attempt to discourage, weaken and rob them of their faith and joy in the Lord. But we see also, despite all that, how triumphantly the Word of the Lord grew.

- Acts 6.7 "And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith."
- Acts 12.24 "But the Word of God grew and multiplied."
- Acts 13.49 "And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."
- Acts 19.20 "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."
- Acts 16.5 "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."
- Acts 13.52 "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

How could all this be possible? I believe it was because of these anchors which God had given them from the very beginning. At that time there were no Bible Schools, or Bible Colleges. They were established in the faith by the Holy Ghost!

So the believers were fed and nourished in the apostles' doctrine, the pure Word of God. The apostles did not depend upon their own wisdom or qualifications. They were men taught of God, anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit. They taught the pure, unadulterated Word of God as the Spirit led them.

They grew in "fellowship". It was not a 'tea' or 'coffee' fellowship, or a 'hand-shake' fellowship. We seem to be very happy to meet on Sunday and give each other a good hand-shake, and that is the extent of our fellowship! But the early believers knew the power of fellowship! They met together as often as possible to exchange and to share what they had received from the Lord.

They grew in the "breaking of bread". In Luke 24.15-30 we read about those two disciples on the Emmaus Road after the resurrection of the Lord. They were communing together, and blindly trying to reason things out concerning what had happened in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen drawing near, walking with them, talking with them and explaining so clearly all about Himself, about His suffering and glory and how it was necessary for Him to die and rise again and enter into His glory. But even though the Lord Himself taught them, they still did not know Him, until He came into their house, at their invitation. When He sat with them in the breaking of bread, their eyes were suddenly opened. It was then that they recognized their Lord.

You see that is how they were taught. Our Lord is so great—so mighty, and so wonderful, we cannot see Him with our ordinary eyes. He is beyond human comprehension—far above the understanding of our human faculties. And yet we can know Him! He can be more real to us than our kith and kin. He can be more precious to us than anybody else in all the world when we know Him in His true glory.

We may study God's Word under able teachers, read many good books written by excellent authors, and we may have wonderful experiences ourselves, as we walk with the Lord; and yet we do not know Him as He ought to be known! We think we know Him; but we may be mistaken.

I remember many years ago, when some of us were in Darjeeling, we went to Tiger Hill to see Mount Everest. We went early in the morning about half past two. When we arrived there were already two hundred people there who

had been waiting a long time to catch a glimpse of the sunrise on Mount Everest. It is a wonderful sight, no doubt! At the appropriate moment, I asked my friend, "Tell me, where is Mount Everest?" He pointed and said, "I think it is behind that cloud, over there." I said, "It can't be!" The crowd all went away thinking that they had seen Mount Everest, when all that they had seen was a cloud! Had they waited a little longer, they would have seen the real sight!

The table of the Lord, and the breaking of bread to remember the Lord's death till He come, provide us an opportunity for an inward sight of Him which is not possible otherwise. It is a place of worship. It is the place where we grow spiritually, and come to know His worth. That is what worship means—"worth-ship". It is to be able to say in broken language, "What is my Lord to me? What will I give back to Him in return?"

In Amritsar, Punjab, there was a merchant selling beautiful Persian carpets. A wealthy man came into the shop and asked the price of a small Persian carpet. The shopkeeper said, "This is not for sale." "I will pay you Rs. 5,000.00 for it if you sell it to me." "I told you, it is not for sale." "Alright, I will pay you Rs. 10,000.00."

"No, sir, I won't sell it - it is not for sale at any price."

"I will pay you Rs. 25,000.00."

"No sir, it is not for sale - to me it is very precious. I won't sell it at any price. When my father died, he gave it to me. His own father had given it to him and that is why he told me, 'Don't sell it to anybody - it is very precious'. So I won't part with it for any amount of money."

The Lord Jesus Christ is also very precious to me—He loved me and died for me. I am prepared to pay any price to show my love for Him. I can say that I love Him more than my father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children or anybody! But it must be from the heart. We might say in a meeting, "O Lord, I love Thee", but when we have to pay the price—we do not pay it! How often we deny Him! How

often we grieve Him! How often we fail to-obey Him because of fear, thinking: What will my neighbour say? What will my friends think of me? What will the world say? We simply do not pay the price the Lord demands!

Let us turn to Matthew 2.2 where we see men at worship.

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

The wise men had seen this unusual star in the east; and had began their long journey—perhaps it took them two years. They were prepared to pay the price, even though they had had no previous experience of the Lord Jesus Christ themselves.

When they had come to the house, they saw the young child, and Mary, His mother. They fell down and worshipped Him. Then they presented their costly gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

In coming such a distance they acknowledged His worthiness. When they found Him, "they worshipped Him". When they brought such precious gifts, they acknowledged in a symbolic way that:

- (i) The One Whom we have come to worship is God—Gold.
- (ii) The One Whom we have come to worship has come to suffer for us—Myrrh.
- (iii) The One Whom we have come to worship is going to save us and be our High Priest—Frankincense.

Even though they had done all that, so far, they had no personal experience of Him! This is true of so many. They worship the Lord, but they have had no personal experience of Him.

Let us look further at another one who worshipped in Luke 7.37,38,47. "A woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet

behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and anointed them with the ointment."

We are not told how this woman found out—perhaps by intuition—that there was a man in that house who could forgive sin. But as she drew near Him, she began to weep. They were tears of repentance. His presence made her conscious of her sinful condition. His very presence is sufficient to break our hearts! She wept in brokenness over her sin, and washed His feet with her tears. What she could not say with words, she said by a single act of kissing His feet. She was altogether untaught in the School of Theology, but her love was spontaneous, and her worship real.

How unlike the man who invited Him to the feast! Doubtless he spent much money for the feast, but he never knew who He was! Rather, he raised the question, "If this man were a prophet, He would have known what manner of woman this is". But this woman had an inward revelation, and she worshipped Him.

In John 12:1-3 we find another woman worshipping the Lord. This woman is Mary. She had known the Lord in the power of His resurrection. She had witnessed her brother Lazarus dead in the grave, but she also witnessed him come forth alive, at the Lord's command. Now she has a new and a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ which she had not known before—and she pours out her worship to Him by anointing His feet with ointment—a very special ointment with fragrance which filled the whole house.

As we see Him working in us—we worship Him in a new way.

The apostle Paul was a man who had experienced many miracles; and had seen visions and signs and had even gone to the third heaven. But his desire and longing was, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection" and not, "Lord, let me see more miracles, or even have another chance to visit the third heaven". He was a man of God who wanted above everything else, to know Christ!

In Matthew 26.2,6,7 we see a similar scene of worship, and yet different in its significance. "Yet know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat."

When Mary had previously worshipped, she anointed His feet. That was six full days before the Passover. But here it is only two days before the Passover, and we see her anointing His head, because she realizes that He is about to die for the sins of the whole world. And then you find the woman with prepared spices, going very early in the morning to anoint the body of the Lord Jesus Christ at the sepulchre. This act of honour was symbolic of their faith in His triumph over death and the new creation which He would bring into existence, that God's fuller glory may be fully seen in days to come.

Now finally let us look at a more glorious sight which is described for us in Revelation 5.11-14. It is the glorious Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the angelic hosts—all in oneness worshipping Him.

"And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

This is a picture of the work of service completed in heaven. This is what it is going to be when we see Him face to face!

At the Lord's table we have this very same message—My God is coming back! He must come back, that the work which He began may be perfected—it won't be complete till He comes back. That is exactly what we do at His table—we declare by faith that we are waiting for that Day. We

believe it will be a wonderful Day when we shall be like Him, and reign with Him!

In His broken body and shed blood, I see every provision made to make me like Himself. In myself I am nothing but iniquity; but in Him I see perfection.

In Ephesians 3.18 I would like you to notice the importance of being *together*. His love and purpose can never be comprehended by ourselves - we require the help of all saints. "that we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God."

There is a great mystery here. You will find love comes in greater measure - fuller measure, when we are brought together as one family. In this family, there is no Jew and Gentile barrier; all are free, all are one from so many families, countries, nationalities, all partaking of the same Lord. Let us then go to worship Him. Amen!

CHAPTER FOUR

BUILDING ACCORDING TO THE HEAVENLY PLAN

Let us read. 1 Corinthians 3.9-16; 1 Peter 2.1-10; Hebrews 12.25-29; Ephesians 2.11-12.

These passages of Scripture may be summed up in what is expressed in 1 Corinthians 3.9: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

In this same connection let us also look at the last portion of Hebrews 12.27: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

We, as God's servants, should always remember, that whatever we do for God that has His blessing will remain for eternity: and that all that we do is going to be tried, tested and proven. It may appear very good and acceptable in the eyes of our fellow-workers and fellow-men, but in the end, God will apply His own test. That is why our eyes must be upon the future, and not upon the present.

We are to be like engineers when they are designing a building. They calculate, and conceive of all possible dangers and pressures, before they settle for a particular design.

This reminds me of a bridge in London built by Sir Christopher Wren, the famous architect who built St. Paul's Cathedral. This was the famous Waterloo Bridge over the Thames River. When it was constructed it was a very fine bridge. But during the first Great War, the Germans dropped

their bombs near the Thames, forcing one pillar of the bridge to sink very low. The London County Council had to spend more than 20,000 pounds sterling every year to reinforce and keep the bridge in repair. The British people are very sentimental about ancient buildings—not like the Americans! The Americans would bring a bulldozer and pull it down straightaway. However, when it became too expensive, they built a new one. Engineers from many parts of England came together to investigate the cause for one pillar of the bridge being affected, and not the other.

Perhaps you know that when a bridge is being built, first of all, long wooden piles are driven into the river bed. Every wooden pile has to be measured accurately to be identical with the other piles. When they lifted the upper structure of the bridge, they discovered that one wooden pile of that particular pillar was not according to dimension. Somehow the overseers had overlooked that detail. There was one quarter of an inch difference. The result was that, while the bridge remained intact for a hundred years, when the real test came—the bomb—that part sank down.

The same with the work of God. We may see blessing for many years; but what will happen when the test of God comes?

Throughout the churches, we come across many mighty men of God, full of the Holy Ghost, whom God has used to save souls. But remember that God always thinks of His work in terms of eternity.

Let us now turn to Exodus 25.1-9 to see how early God began to show His heavenly plan—when He gave instructions to Moses to erect a tabernacle, verse 8—“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” Verse 9—“According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make.”

As soon as God had redeemed the Israelites and delivered them from the power of Egypt, He conveyed this significant

message through Moses: "Let them make me a sanctuary."

What is in the mind of God in asking us to go and preach the Gospel? Why does He want souls? Why is He, our loving God, so concerned in seeking a lost sinner? Why is He so much after us? It is because He wants a sanctuary. *He wants a house!*

We have to tell people from the beginning, just what is God's purpose in saving us—He has desired that you and I build that house. Every believer must be given that privilege; though he may not accept it, yet he must be made conscious of being part of God's sanctuary.

All the material used in the building of the tabernacle was to teach them in the first place about the Lord Jesus Christ—His grace, goodness, holiness, power, beauty, glory and fullness. And in the second place, how all of us become part of that fullness in becoming a member of that sanctuary—God's habitation.

In Ephesians the apostle uses seven names for God's people.

He calls them the "Church" of the Lord Jesus Christ, because they have been called out from the world—God's peculiar people.

He calls them the "Body of Christ", because the same life flows through every member. That Body contains God's fullness—the fullness of Him, which filleth all in all. The health of that life is supplied to every tissue, nerve and fibre.

He calls them, "one new man", no more Jew and Gentile—all human and national differences forgotten.

He calls them, the heavenly "family" that we may be able to enjoy the divine love of the Father.

Then He says, "Ye are God's building". Again He calls them "God's Temple".

Then finally, the "Bride" of Christ.

Now why are we called "God's building"? Because a building is constructed by a plan.

Go to Bombay for instance. You will see that these wealthy people own many buildings that have been constructed without the help of an architect—they hired their own contractors. These buildings have a nice outward show, but they have no proper light nor ventilation. They had no concern for the health of the people who would be living there.

An architect, however, in designing a building, considers its light, ventilation, water, sewerage and sanitation. Then he will build. Nowadays, in proper cities the plan of every building must first be submitted and examined by experts and sanction to build must be obtained.

To say: "Ye are God's building" means that we are not merely concerned with preaching the Gospel to people. No, we have a far greater purpose than simply that.

We read in Revelation 21:7 that the overcomer "shall inherit all things". Do you see this determination of God throughout the Scriptures even to the end? It shows God working for the sinner, in not only redeeming his soul, but redeeming all that he lost because of sin. How will he inherit it? And how will it happen? The answer is in verse 3 of this same chapter:

"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

That very same thing is expressed in 2 Corinthians 6:16, which shows that it is only when we become God's temple in a real sense, that God's fullness comes into us, and God redeems for us what we have lost.

To become God's building, we must be built, first of all, upon a strong and deep foundation— a rock foundation. As God's servants we must be sure that we spend enough time studying God's Word with the people; otherwise they will

remain weak spiritually. We must know that our responsibility is not only to preach, but to take the people deep in the foundation truths of the faith.

But if we want only a big report in order to amaze people, then all we have to do is count the hands—and feet also! You will please the people, but not God. He wants a pure and a deep, abiding work; and not a mere show of hands, and other outward signs.

We have to make sure that the people whom we serve are brought to a proper spiritual experience of salvation. Then we must help them to understand that they can have a share in the House of God. God makes that clear when He tells Moses, "that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart". It was to those who had the experience of the blood on that Passover night, that Moses gave this appeal. It was a sign that they were washed and forgiven, and now ready to receive more. But it was perfectly optional. There was no compulsion—no force—no pressure.

They were simply given an opportunity to become a part of God's sanctuary; and also to bring a willing offering.

This is how it applies to us also, but it is only a beginning.

I know of a missionary who came to the Punjab. He had never seen a *chapati* made in the Punjabi way. Actually it is very nice corn bread, about half an inch thick, and twelve inches in diameter. It is baked in a slow oven. We had prepared some of these, as well as plenty of green leaf mixture to go on top of it. He ate it—but only the mixture. Not knowing that the other was bread, he said, "Here, take this plate away!"

He never knew that it was bread! That is like so many people who do not learn how to enjoy their salvation. It is the duty of teachers and shepherds that those who are saved through us may learn how to enjoy their salvation.

I remember many years ago, while travelling in the train,

some friends met me at a station and gave me a nice big basket which I put under the seat. Next station I got off to get something to eat, and managed to get some stale food. The next morning, I happened to see this basket under the seat, and looking in, I saw food! Plenty of nice bread and fried fish and so many other things, and I never knew it!

This is like so many people who have a Bible, but do not trouble to look inside, nor do they know how to use it! Nobody has taught them!

In Karachi, one day a Hindu man said to me, "Show me one good Christian in the whole of Karachi, and I will be a Christian today". Numerically at that time there were about 14,000 Christians living in that city -4,000 Protestants, and the rest Roman Catholics. I could not show him one person who was truly a spiritual man! That gave me a burden to pray. About once a week, I used to go by the seaside to fast and pray. The challenge of this Hindu man burdened me to ask the Lord to give me the answer. I was not going to be defeated by this man's challenge.

After many months of prayer the Lord gave me a fearful message. He told me clearly: "I want you to go to all parts of India and make every man who bears my name to possess a full Bible, whether they are literate or illiterate. Tell them that if they are called by My name, they must have a Bible. Secondly, teach them how to use the Bible. Thirdly, teach them how to pray, how to come to Me for their needs".

It seemed like a simple thing, and yet I was so afraid to give that message. Furthermore, how could that message solve my problem. I had been waiting there for two full years in that place. So I began that evening. "Those of you who have brought Bibles, will you kindly show them? Not New Testaments, I mean full Bibles." There were only four Bibles in the whole crowd! For four days I kept asking the same thing. They kept saying: "How can we bring one, if we haven't got one".

"Anybody who can afford to buy shoes for his feet, and

brass vessels for his cooking, can afford to buy a full Bible also", I said. So we ordered 200 Hindu Bibles from Allaha-bad. They were not given away—the people paid for them.

In the meetings, they used their Bibles. They had to be taught that it is not an ordinary text book like they have in schools. They were taught to use it reverently, and to expect God to speak, and answer their questions and problems from it. "If you have to visit any family, take God's book along, and ask God to answer all your questions from the Bible", I continued to tell them.

Some people are very lazy. They take a chair, and a cup of coffee, and that's the way they study the Bible! We must go to it on our knees! And thus, faithfully, lovingly and perseveringly we taught them how to enjoy this wonderful book.

From this same Book man can learn about the heavenly plan, and that God has a plan for everything.

In many parts of India, I have found strife and court cases everywhere among Christians, some of which have been going on for many, many years! The pastors and missionaries invariably blame the people saying, "They are such a quarrelsome people". I tell them, "You cannot blame the people—you don't follow God's Word yourself! How can you expect people to live in peace when they are ignorant of God's holy Word and His heavenly plan?"

You cannot build a building without a plan, and you cannot make alterations in the building contrary to the plan. The builders and labourers have no business making changes without the engineer's approval.

But we see that men have made many alterations in the name of what they call "Self-Constitution", in some blue book, red book, or green book full of man's wisdom!

I was once in a place close to Poona, where about 20 pastors were having their committee meetings. They were quarrelling and fighting for two hours: "Please see our rule No. 25; rule No. 3; now rule No. 7 from the blue book".

After that they gave me an opportunity to speak to them, I said to them plainly, "I could hear you talking about the blue book for two hours—how about the Bible? Which is more trustworthy—the blue book or the Bible? Why can't you say, 'Let us see what the Bible says'? You are very bothered about the blue book; but you are not in the least concerned about God's Book!"

Can you not see how in the name of the "Constitution" men often introduce friction?

Scripturally speaking, it is not right to put ungodly men into power. They make their own rules concerning communion. Money governs the vote; and when they need money they go anywhere to beg for it! How can we expect God to put His seal on such doings?

Now we see in the Bible, that there is a heavenly plan for the work of the Lord. We cannot have fellowship in anything with unbelievers. Preachers and missionaries often say to believers that they must not marry unbelievers. "If you are a born again Christian", they say, "then make sure that your life partner is also born again". But these verses in 2 Corinthians 6, 13-15 teach truth which goes beyond that. It applies not only to marriage, but also in church matters. How can we labour effectively with unbelievers? It is impossible!

We cannot build the Church of God with a mixture—it won't work. We can only lay a good foundation if we ourselves have a deep, and a living experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Chief Corner Stone.

To build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, does not mean that we build upon the bones, but upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets. What we have been taught, we practise, and declare what we have fully obeyed.

We cannot be governed by our own fancies, and practices, however good that might be! Our safety lies in obeying God's Word.

Now the Bible has given us a complete plan for all our need. Just as the apostles and prophets were sent by God in other days, even so now, they can be raised up by prayer. We need to follow God's Word accurately in determining how to be shepherded, how to be controlled, how to gather for worship.

The clear instructions which you read in 1 Timothy 3. 1-10 were what was being practised by the apostles. If a man desired the office of a bishop or of an elder, he had to be taught, tried, tested and proven. And when he was found ready, and fully qualified, he was allowed to be chosen—but not by man's word only!

According to Acts 14.22,23 we see Paul and other members of the team going from place to place "confirming the souls of the disciples". They were taught by a good shepherd, either by the apostle himself or by men like Titus or Timothy, who were left behind to guide and teach the flock; and after they were fully taught, elders were ordained by prayer and appointment of the Holy Ghost. This was the general practice followed by the apostles and their co-workers and that is how they fulfilled God's plan. This is how the early church was able to withstand and remain strong when awful persecution arose. They had been properly instructed.

Then for the protection of the believers, the apostle warns them in Acts 20.28-32—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the flock of God . . . For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

He tells them that the devil would be busy. They would be attacked by 'wolves'. They would be deceived by perverse men. For that reason, the "Holy Ghost has made you overseers". And to make sure they were God's appointed

workers Paul taught them himself for three years, even with tears; that they might be properly warned and protected. We know from God's Word that the enemy is more active in these last days than ever before; and that believers are going to be attacked through all kinds of weapons of the enemy's devices; by wrong doctrine, by false teaching, by oppression, by persecution, suffering, poverty, strife, deceitful workers. If we fail to protect them by proper teaching, we have failed God.

Let us give an example. The people know there might be war. They know something of the weapons being manufactured in Russia. They know that the Americans are spending much money for a strong national defence. They agree that the Government must now make provision to defend their country, their allies and their friends. War may break out and there may not be anyone left! It would be wrong to keep quiet, and say carelessly—'Let us see to this matter afterwards'.

Now as an apostle, Paul had several types of ministry. He had to function as an apostle, and also as a prophet, evangelist, and as a pastor. God's servants have the same ministry today, but are we fulfilling it? If we ourselves cannot do this work, let us pray that God will raise up men so that His flock will be protected. But do not hinder God's work. If He has not called you for this ministry, then please stand aside, and do not interfere in the work of God.

It was the 31st of May 1935 when the earthquake came in Quetta. I remember that an engineer in 1933 had warned the Government saying: "There may be an earthquake in this city area in about a year, you had better make some provision, and construct some earthquake-proof houses". But no one bothered about it. They said, "How can an earthquake come? We have lived safely for so many years!" The railway officials, however, accepted six quarters which were earthquake-proof as an experiment. The earthquake came, and in eighteen seconds, 58,000 people were killed, and every house became rubble—all the stone, brick and mud

houses. Now, it has become Government law that every house built in Quetta, be built earthquake-proof. They learned their lesson by experience.

Let me say again, that there is going to be, not only one, but many severe attacks of Satan upon God's people. He will come like a roaring lion, or even like an angel of light.

We as God's servants are responsible for the flock. We are given the ministry of warning people and making provision for their spiritual protection. Do not be deceived by temporary blessing. God is gracious, but He keeps to His original plan.

In 1 Corinthians 3.6 we notice that Paul the apostle has gone a step further when he admits that "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

He admits that there is need for many co-workers; and that he himself is not sufficient, even though he is an apostle. There are some men whom God uses to plant; others are necessary to water; but they must labour in oneness and unity. If you have been called only to sow the sacred seed and have no other calling or burden, then you must also pray that God will send an "Apollos" to water the seed.

Paul was one who could not always remain longer than to do the planting. But as he was leaving, he would remind those who came after him: "This is God's work, therefore, let a man take heed how he buildeth thereon". He must know how to build upon the labours of others; and how to labour in the Spirit.

What we do in the flesh will be burned up. What we do for our own glory will be burned up. What we do that is not according to the Scriptures, will also be burned up.

It is for this reason, that the Apostle Paul is so emphatic when he says in 1 Corinthians 3.12-13 "If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire;

and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

The same idea is brought out in Hebrews 12.27,28, where God says that there is going to be a "removing" and a "shaking" like that of a fruit tree. Everything will be shaken, and even the heavens and the stars shall be removed.

Why is He going to shake the heavens? That He may bring into existence His unshakeable, unchanging, everlasting kingdom. There have been many kingdoms, and many great kings, but they have all disappeared and gone. The Lord Jesus Christ will establish a kingdom which cannot be shaken. In the same way our labours are also going to be shaken by the Lord; whatever is not for eternity, will not stand. Whatever is not a part of God's house is going to be shaken severely.

You will all have heard of the flood which came to Poona. I do not know how many crores of rupees they spent in building the dam there! It was an earthen dam, and it ought not to have been used so soon. This was the mistake of the engineer. An earthen dam must be allowed to stand at least six months before being used. But because of a common opinion that it was good and strong, they began to use it for the water supply. When the heavy rains began to fall somebody noticed a small breach on one side of the dam. If only the engineers had taken the warning in time! It was not an ordinary breach, but foolishly they struggled all night with iron sheets and cement bags to try and fill it up. Alas! it became wider and wider. It was midday on the 12th of July; when the workmen had just come out for a cup of tea, that the dam collapsed. Just imagine that huge wall of water, about three feet high, moving at a speed of 47 miles an hour! Huge stone boulders were being carried away like straw. No one knows how many thousands lost their lives in the force of that flood. All because of the negligence of the engineers!

If God's servants fall it is most serious because it is God's work that is affected!

God has warned each one to take heed how he builds

thereupon! We can't just go on preaching the Gospel without feeling responsible for the consequences of that Word. Most people will not understand the full meaning this warning, but those who are preaching and teaching God's Word must take heed. Let us remember what happened in China! Who would have believed that one day China would be so severely shaken? It may happen also in India. We must be prepared for any condition which may arise. The Scriptures warn us in Revelation 12,12 that "the devil has come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Why is it that the Allies seek to give international help? Why do they spend so much money in other countries? They may have plenty of money in America, and plenty of weapons, but they also realize that there is greater strength in creating more allies. They cannot stand alone against Russia! In case of war, they know that they must be able to count on their friends.

Spiritually, we must stand together. Our safety is in oneness. When we as a Church remain one, we are better able to withstand the attacks of the Evil One. You cannot stand alone. God may have used you mightily, and we can thank God for that, but remember when you are being attacked by the devil, you suffer alone! It is by oneness that we can defeat the devil—not by knowledge, nor by miracles, nor by science, nor by wealth, nor by any other thing, but by standing together in the power of God.

Oneness is our strongest, spiritual weapon. We cannot be one by being independent, though by nature man wants to be independent. We see that the Lord Jesus Christ especially prayed: "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in them, that they also may be one in us." What joy and inspiration and blessing there comes from being united!

Spiritual oneness is only possible in the Church, where we are brought together first of all as a family, then as co-workers and fellow-partners of the Lord Jesus Christ, having

one common Head, though being many members in one Body.

An example of this oneness is found in the story of Joseph. His brothers determined that they didn't want him. So first of all they cast him into the pit, then they sold him, and almost killed him. They said among themselves, "We are eleven, so what does it matter if one dies!"

But then God sent a famine, and through their sufferings we find them going to Egypt. They then realized how much they needed Joseph and when he revealed himself to them he also said, "I too want you; I cannot do without you; even though you forsook me, and sent me to Egypt. When God delivers you, carry my bones back with you." What did he mean by these words?

Joseph wanted to be wholly and solely identified with his own people. He wanted to be entirely separated from Egypt's glory. "Ye are my brethren. Ye are my people", he said.

We too must remain together as a Church, for it is only then that we can be benefitted by all the gifts of the Church; the apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors, all working together and in oneness.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRUE LEVITE

Numbers 1.47; 2.1-34.

Of all the tribes of Israel, the Levites were the most privileged to live in the midst of the camp surrounding the tabernacle. The tabernacle, according to the plan of God, was reected in the centre. This was to remind them that God, holy God—wanted to live and work among His people.

Now the name “Levi” means *joined* or *united*. As sinners, there wasn’t a ray of hope for meeting with God, except through the mercy seat, which speaks of the cross of Jesus Christ. The tabernacle and all its details speak of the longing of God the Father to have His life flow into us. Every believer becomes a Levite when he is joined to God through Jesus Christ. He is made nigh to God through His Blood.

I remember so distinctly, when I was yet a Sikh, praying and crying as a child: “O God, where art Thou? Tell me how to find Thee”. Every time I went to the Sikh temple to say my prayers, God seemed so very, very far away—millions of miles away; and it seemed that it would take many re-births to get even a glimpse of Him. He was so far away! But now I can say, He is so near! I know that His life is flowing through me!

This was the privilege of a Levite. He lived so close to the tabernacle that he could see God’s cloud resting upon it. God was there, the living God was speaking from between the Cherubim, above the mercy-seat.

Now you will see that after the Levites had been commanded to camp around the tabernacle that the other eleven tribes were also given the heavenly plan to camp. Three

tribes were to camp on the east side, three on the south, three on the west, and three on the north.

When they marched, they were to observe God's order. The ark came in the middle carried on the shoulders of the Levites (not in a bullock cart). Judah came in the lead, then came Issachar, Zebulon, Reuben, Simeon and Gad; the Levites in the centre, and Ephraim close behind followed by Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, Asher, and lastly, Naphtali. This was the order appointed by God, and they could not change it for any purpose. From that we must learn one thing, and that is, that God is a God of order, whatever or however He does a thing, it really doesn't matter. We may not see nor understand it, but He works by a plan; and our safety and growth depend upon following the divine order. We can't change it. For every believer there is a plan of God.

In the eyes of the world, I am a foolish man—despised by my fellowmen. But because of Christ's precious blood applied to my soul, I have become precious to God—Hallelujah! I may be a sweeper, a stone-breaker, a coolie; but before Him I am very precious, and my ministry is as precious as that of anyone else. I must take my place according to the divine order. None can say, 'Go here or go there'. Others have no business making choices for me. That plan was made for me by God, and I must stay where God has put me. I know my calling. I know my place and position in God's heavenly plan. Have you found your place in God's plan? Can you truthfully and joyfully say, 'I know my ministry'?

As an engineer, plans were always my problem. As a new Christian too, I kept on making plans and God kept breaking them—one by one, till they were all broken.

At a meeting in Winnipeg, Canada, a very tall man, Mr. Flint, came and with a very strong hand shook my hand and said: "Why don't you go to India and preach the Gospel?" I told him: "Mr. Flint, I am an engineer—I have been training for five years, and what is worse, I stutter and stammer and I am very nervous when I speak even to a small group of

people." He smiled and walked away. But for two years I kept hearing his words! I had some very 'nice' promises and arguments to say to the Lord. You see, I thought I could give my income to the Lord's work, by employing good preachers and singers. But God said: "No, I don't want your money, I want you."

When we say 'Yes' to God, then it is His business to train us, equip us and thrust us forth. It was like a miracle with me in the beginning, a man with so many handicaps! It is only by grace! I know one thing: I am in His plan.

One day it came to me this way: Why should the Lord take so much time in giving the details concerning these names? The Lord has His purpose. First, there are twelve names mentioned of the twelve tribes. The number twelve denotes *foundation*; just as the number seven stands for *perfection*, and eight for election and other recurring numbers also have significance in Scripture.

Now if I want to be a true Levite I must come on a strong foundation—the heavenly foundation which cannot be shaken by changing world conditions. There I am occupied with the Lord Himself—where money or worldly honour can no more deceive me. He has the first place in my heart, life and ministry.

Then you will find in this same chapter two, that to each name there has been added two more names totalling thirty-six names. (Those of you who want to prepare sermons will find material here for 36 sermons!) Each name has a message and a deep meaning. They represent experiences by which the believer is able to grow spiritually.

Unlike animals, human babies do not walk in a day—it takes time for them to grow. It is likewise true that to become spiritually mature, it takes time. We must be willing to pass through spiritual experiences as God directs—and you will find that these thirty-six names point to some of those experiences which will draw us closer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first place, it is clear from verse two, that it was compulsory for "every man of the children of Israel" to "pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house". That means, that every person had to be in his God-appointed position. God says: "Don't be jealous!"

In the West, it seems that the ladies do not wish to be ladies, but prefer to be men! They wear men's trousers, and coats, and have their hair cut short! Has God made a mistake? Every believer must be what and where God meant him to be.

The first name to consider is Judah (verse 3). *Judah* means *praise*. If you want to be a true Levite, the first thing to learn is to praise God. We don't grow spiritually by hearing good sermons or by having good teachers, or by seeing visions and dreams. We must praise God from morning until night!

In London, it is very hard to say 'good-morning' to people. The first thing they are likely to say is: 'What a rotten day!' You will never see a man smilingly say: 'Hello, how do you do!' Because the first thing they want to say is: 'What a miserable day!' So I used to tell them, 'I will never say that! To me, every day is a good day! It may be cloudy or rainy, sunny or a foggy and cold day, or even hot, but I never say, 'It's a miserable day' ". As children of God we can rejoice in any day; and praise God for any situation. Let there be sickness or health, poverty or prosperity, friends or enemies, in lonely and far-off places, I can thank God for all these things.

In 2 Chronicles 20.15,18-22 we have a living illustration of how the people of God learned to triumph through praising God.

King Jehoshaphat and his people were trembling with fear because they saw the enemy coming upon them—with weapons and armies, much larger than theirs. The Lord showed the king, that it would not be a matter of fighting and fearing, but praising and singing. When they believed

God, they began to praise and they went out before the enemy singing, "Praise the Lord". The Lord smote the enemy.

That is a divine principle. The enemy may come like a flood, but you must learn how to praise God in advance. Generally speaking, we only praise Him when we get something from Him. That is our nature.

When God answers our prayers,¹ we say, 'God is good!' And when there is some delay, we say sadly, 'God has forgotten!' And we shed tears like a child!

While aboard a ship, a little girl used to go and play with the Captain. One day her doll fell into the sea. So the little girl begged the Captain to stop the ship and fetch the doll out of the water. But the Captain exclaimed, "How can I stop such a big ship for such a little doll?" From then on, she refused to play with him. No matter how much the Captain tried to win her, she would only reply, "You are a very bad Captain, I am not going to play with you any more". When the ship reached the shore, the Captain went to one of the shops and bought the little girl a big doll and wrapped it up in a nice box; and took it to her at the hotel where she was staying. He called to her, but she said, "No, no, you are a bad captain. I won't come to you". Slowly, as the Captain opened the box, the little girl saw the doll, and asked: "Is it for me? Now you are a very good Captain—a very good Captain".

That is our nature. When God answers our prayers, He is so good. When troubles and trials come, our faith fails. The first thing we must learn is how to praise Him like Judah. Let there be darkness like the thickest night, let there be suffering of any kind, I know my Lord will never fail nor forsake.

At a certain place in Canada, I was feeling very sad and sorry for myself. I was a stranger in the city and didn't know a single soul. I said to myself, 'Suppose I fall sick, who will take care of me? Suppose my money is spent,

where will I go?" With these thoughts I felt very miserable and dejected. Then I went into a big store and sat down in a big chair in an empty room. In a little while I fell asleep. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder, and a voice spoke to me, "Why did you say that you are alone? Didn't I say to you that I would never leave you nor forsake you." I promptly asked the Lord to forgive my doubts. I never knew He was so near! As I came out of the store and stood on the corner, a tall man began to ask me if I was from India. I said, "Yes, I come from India". So he told me that his parents were very interested in meeting a man from India. He motioned to me to get into his car, which I did, and he took me to his home. His parents seemed very happy to see me, and asked me to stay for dinner. They had roast lamb and mint sauce—it tasted so good! I had been saying, "Nobody loves me", but God was beginning to prove to me, that, for me He had prepared so many homes unknown to me.

It is possible that God tests us for a while, but He doesn't forget us. That is why He takes us through such experiences, so that we learn the lesson of praising Him. Praise Him in the morning, praise Him at midday and evening, and praise Him in all situations, and trials. He is faithful, and gracious and will not fail.

The question is, how do we praise God?

Nahshon means *origin* or a *mouthpiece*. If you want to learn how to praise God then become God's mouthpiece. That means, never be ashamed to give testimony to His saving power to anybody when you are on a bus or train, or even in the market. Many times we are terrified by appearances, but when we testify, our fears always go away.

One day God spoke to me clearly: "You go and talk to that man over there." I looked at the man's curly moustache and his chin, and thought: "O no! never!" He seemed so proud, and I was sure that he would not give any respect or attention to the Bible! Again God spoke to me: "You leave everything to me, and go and talk to him."

So, trembling, I went and sat beside him and said: "Sir, please look at this book." He looked at the book with great pleasure and said: "Please sir, do you have a full Urdu Bible for me?" I took his address and delivered him a full Bible the next day. He was so thankful and paid me the full price. He continued: "I have waited for more than two years to get this book, I wanted it so badly. I want to know more about it!"

He was such a hungry soul. But I was going by the face and the moustache and was terrified by him. When the Lord gives you His Word, you must be His mouthpiece.

Our next consideration is *Amminadab*. His name means: '*My people are willing*'. Are you willing to give God whatever He demands? If He demands time, give it. If He demands money, give it. Do not hold back from Him anything that He demands of you. It is because we don't give willingly to Him that we don't know how to praise Him.

One day a man came to me and said: "Brother, I am feeling very cold; can you give me something to cover me?" I said: "Wait just here, while I go and find God's will." As I prayed God told me to give him that "new blanket". But I prayed even more, because I thought God had made some mistake. It was a new blanket with not a single hole in it! But the Lord said: "It is My blanket; you give it to him". So I very half-heartedly gave him the blanket, thinking all the while that I would have to suffer cold that night. I began to scheme as to how I would keep warm. But when I came back to my room that night, there was a parcel there with a note. The note said: "God has spoken to us to send this to you. Please accept it as from Him". In the parcel was a brand new blanket, the same colour and size as the other.

Many times we murmur. We say: "Lord, not so much! I must keep something for my wife, my children, or for my old age". But God must come first. Whatever He demands must be given cheerfully. The more we give that way, the

more we prove His faithfulness. I thank God that this is what He taught me from the beginning.

In verse 5 we have mention of *Issachar*, which means: '*I am certain of my reward*'. In other words, do everything as unto God. When you do a kindness to anyone in need, do you do it to be rewarded by your fellow-men? When you give money for some good cause, do you give more when your name and the amount is posted on a list? That is not giving to God. That is not what Issachar means. He means: I am certain of reward! I am not looking to man for my reward!

Nethanee' means: *God gives*. God can give more than man can give. One famous question was always being asked of me in America: "What do you want for your work?" I would tell them: "Nothing, I will go only to God; not to Americans, Canadians, English or Indians. What God gives me is sufficient. He knows my needs much more than you do. So why should I go to men?" They say: "After all it is God's work, and we must tell our fellow-believers!" To broadcast and make your needs known is unscriptural. It is lack of faith. Before God you become a beggar. First of all, prove God. God can speak to anyone on my behalf anywhere in the world. If God fails to give, then you can ask men for it!

In Madras, many years ago, we rented a house for a meeting, and we had to pay about Rs. 300.00 for the rent. We told no one about this, but quietly prayed. I then had a letter from someone in Malabar, and it read like this: "Brother, I am sending you a money order for Rs. 285.00. My little girl has been sick and unconscious for about fourteen days. When she recovered, her first words to me were: 'Send Brother Bakht Singh some money'. I said: 'My child, we have no money'. Then she took the gold chain from around her neck. I have sold the gold chain, and this is the money I have received for it". It came in exactly the time it was needed, in God's time.

This is the way we have been proving God for thirty years!

But please don't give any gentle hint like: "This is my last writing pad!" or "We haven't had any butter for a week!" All these hints will weaken your faith. Remember Nethaneel: the God who gives abundantly. He never slumbers; He never forgets; He knows my need, and at the right moment He meets it.

When I was about to go to Australia, I had to go via America, and a man suggested I should get a round-trip ticket. I prayed quietly, and the very same week I received four gifts: one came from South Arabia, one from India, one from Canada, and one from Germany; and they all came together at the same time.

The gift from Arabia has an interesting story. Many years ago I was in a place called Surat, and I went to the station to catch a train for Bombay. I prayed: "Now Lord, which shall it be, the first, second or third train?" They all went at different times that afternoon. The Lord said to me: "Go by the second train, the second train". When the first train pulled in, I looked in and saw lots of room to lie down comfortably, but the Lord kept saying: "No, no, the second train".

The train went away, and the second one pulled in, and in the carriage a man said to me: "Brother, we are going to a marriage, would you please give us God's message?" The wedding party, twenty-five in all, was going from Baroda to Bulsar. So I gave God's message at midnight to the wedding party on the train. When we reached Bulsar we prayed, and the party got off. While the train was still moving, a man came running with an envelope of money. After about three years I received a second letter from the man for whom I had prayed in the carriage. And now again a third letter came containing the third gift. All these events started at Surat station. It is safe to obey God implicitly. He will not fail us; He gives! I do not know of any occasion in the last

thirty years of ministry when God has failed us. We have never given hints or suggestions to anybody, either by letter, passing remark, or appeal. Yet often we have had to spend many more thousands in God's service, than even a mission board has had to do! God has never failed.

Next comes *Zuar*, which means: *little*. In other words, what God gives is more than man gives; because what God gives He multiplies. When I lived in England I learned to say: "Madam, I enjoyed my tea very much; the tea and cake were so good!" Otherwise she would not be happy. To man we have to say these things, but not to God. When God gives, He gives without obligation. Little from God is more than much from man.

Zebulon means a *dwelling place*. When we follow the order of these names we learn how to *praise God*; how to *trust God* for everything; how to *make God our reward*; and how to *build a house for God*. God has called me to make a house for Him. First of all, He makes my body His temple. Then we are all put together to become God's house. Stones by themselves cannot make a building. We have to be brought into the plan—the roof, the wall or the floor. We have to be cut and chiselled, planed and softened, and smoothed and refined, to fit into God's building—God's plan.

For many years I did not know what my real place was in God's House. But now I know it. He has shown me from His Word. You too should seek God by prayer, and do not leave Him till you know what is your specific ministry in His House. Then let Him cut you, smooth you, and do whatever He likes, that you may come into that plan.

In the same verse seven, you will find also the name *Eliab*. It means *God is Father*. If you want to enjoy your place in God's House, then learn how to call God your Father. See Luke 11.13; Hebrews 12.6-10. If I say that He is my Father, then I must be willing to be chastised by Him. He must punish me and scourge me to bring me to His standard, and to make me a partaker of His holiness.

It is by chastening and suffering that we become strong. Of course it is hard and we murmur and complain. We resent that kind of treatment. But we don't get faith by text books or by knowledge; we get a strong living faith by suffering and trials. You cannot escape suffering. It is God's order. But go to Him as a Father, because He knows how to give you what you need. "If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more will your Heavenly Father give!"

In verse 10 there is *Reuben*, which means, *Behold, I see*. God has seen my need. In the first place, God sees my life—my private life. I dare not hide anything from Him. I must be willing to open my heart to Him. Then secondly, He sees my condition; He sees my trouble, my difficulties. There is no need for me to go giving hints to people.

I feel that is why God's people in the West are so bankrupt spiritually—they have developed into such clever beggars. Whenever there is a missionary campaign, these 'clever beggars' are invited to help lift the offerings. They plead, they beg: "Give more generously, give liberally!" Let us remember that, whatever our need, God sees it, and we must call upon Him, and not look to earthly friends.

In India there are some cows that will not give milk easily. They require experts to milk them. Experts find it easy to squeeze milk from stubborn cows!

This is how it seems to be in some campaigns in the West. But God sees, and does not need our worldly ways and methods to get His work done!

Elizur means, *God is a Rock*. He is a strong God; never changing. What He has said, He will also perform. He will not go back on His Word. Please believe that! "Call upon Me, and I will answer thee." (Jer. 33.3). God's promise is so clear.

Shedeur means, *the Shedder of Light*: the same God also gives light. If I walk in the light of what He has shown me,

I know that He will help me, and look after me, and supply all my needs.

Simeon means *hearing*. God can hear also. I see in Isaiah 65,24, that He can hear while we are yet speaking.

I was once travelling to Delhi on the train. It was a third class compartment and very crowded. I was sitting next to a window. I told the Lord that I needed a shave, but if I got up I would lose my seat: "Will You please send me a barber right here". I put my head out of the window, and there was a barber. At the moment he had completed the shave, the train moved on!

You see, I believed God fully, and while I was yet speaking, He heard. I could tell you of many other instances of how while we prayed in faith, God was already answering our prayers. So we praise and thank Him even before the answer comes.

Shelumiel means, *the peace of God*. Try to maintain your inward peace, for it is **by inward peace** that we can have proper faith. By that peace we know that He will not fail us. He is the God of peace. Resolve that you will not be disturbed by second causes. Never allow the devil to disturb your peace. God will always work on your behalf.

Zurishaddai means, *the Almighty is the Rock*. There is nothing too hard for God, for He is the God of impossibilities. "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1,37).

Now you see what I mean! You can develop thirty-six messages out of this chapter! Due to shortness of time, I want to touch just briefly on some of the names that remain.

Ephraim is mentioned in verse 18. The name means *Fruitful*. Ephraim was the son of Joseph who through fifteen years of affliction and suffering of various descriptions, was a fruitful bough, according to Genesis 49,22. We also must be fruitful in affliction.

Ammihud means *the people are honourable; the people*

are praiseworthy. God wants to make us honourable, and people of high position, though, like Joseph, we may be sorely tried for a long time.

Manasseh means Forgetting. It is very very hard to forget the past. Joseph was a perfect example of one who was able to forget as well as to forgive. Maybe that is why he named his son Manasseh. We may say: "I forgive you, but don't come to see me any more. I cannot forget what you have done to me!" Manasseh teaches us to forget all those past painful experiences. God overrules. I believe it! He will transform all things for His glory.

Gamaliel means Recompense. God is our only compensation. If a fire destroys your building you go immediately to the Insurance Company, and ask for compensation. Have you thought of compensation for your old age? God is the same in every age! He will not fail, nor forget.

Pedahzur means the God who redeems. By our many follies and mistakes we suffer loss, but my God will redeem every loss.

Benjamin means the son of my right hand. When he was born, his mother wanted to call him, Ben-oni, the son of my sorrow. But his father protested, saying, "He must be called the son of my right hand." And so it was that through Benjamin, all the sons of Jacob came into favour with Joseph. Through sorrowful experiences we are brought to God's right hand.

Abidan means judge. It implies that God will judge my cause. He is my Judge. I go to Him, and cease to take revenge nor wish anyone any evil. He is my Judge.

Gideoni means one who is a warrior. As we learn how to conquer temptation, we have more strength for every trial.

Dan means justice. If anybody is trying to do me harm. I believe one day God will surely take up my case. I shall not lose any sleep. He is my Advocate. Let them speak ill

of me, I will praise Him. Stephen is an example of one being falsely accused, and yet his face was shining. We too can rejoice even when we are falsely accused.

Ahiezzer means a helping brother. We have to learn how to help and even pray for our enemies.

Asher means the Lord is my happiness. The Lord is not my money, my gifts, nor my success; but He Himself is my happiness.

When King Mahmud came to India, he plundered and looted every temple. On his return, he said: "Now, my brave comrades, you have been so faithful, and have suffered with me all these months, open up the bags of treasures, and divide them up into one hundred heaps." There were heaps of diamonds, rubies, gold and silver. "Now each of you go and make a choice." One soldier kept standing close to the king. Eventually the king urged him to go and get his share but all he would say was: "No, sir, I choose you. I do not want this passing wealth; I want you." Afterwards this same soldier became heir to the king's throne.

There are so many people who want only things. But Asher says: "He Himself is my happiness." You will never get the same joy from anything else as from the Lord Himself. The gifts which He gives are not to be compared with the living Lord Himself.

Pagiel means God meets. What a privilege that God comes to meet with me. The Lord Himself comes and speaks to me, give me messages, and blesses my soul.

Ocran means the trembler. By God you can cause all the powers of darkness to tremble, when you are conscious of the divine presence.

Naphtali means wrestling. As Jacob wrestled and would not let the angel go, except he bless him, so we, too, must go on wrestling and prevailing as Abraham also did on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. This is our privilege too, in our ministry for each other and the world. Thus God works

through your intercessory prayer in many parts of the world.

Ahira means *the deliverer from evil*. We are deliverers by prayer. Even those who have lived in darkness and sin and shame can be rescued by our prayers.

A man was born again in our meetings. The next time I saw him he had backslidden. He told me he was going back into the old life of stealing; so I told him I would pray for him. Soon after, I saw him again, and he said: "Brother, all my plans were broken, and everything went wrong." So our prayers can destroy the power of evil.

Enan means *the fountain*. We become a fountain of life through the life of God flowing in and through us.

Gad, in verse 14, means *Behold, a troop cometh*. It means we shall see great things in small events, as in the case when our Lord, through the woman at the well—through one person—won the whole of Samaria.

Now we must keep on praying that God will make us true Levites, strongly joined and living close to the heart of God, enjoying unbroken fellowship with the living God. Go through those names again, one by one, and continue praying: "Lord, give me the experience of Judah, Issachar, of Zebulon, Reuben, Simeon, Gad."

CHAPTER SIX

NO MAN FORBIDDING HIM

"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." (Acts 28.31).

I want you to notice especially that last part of this verse, "no man forbidding him", or "no man hindering him". The Christian life can be compared to a hurdle or an obstacle race. This is a sport which we hope all learned at school. Those entering the race are required to jump various hurdles without knocking over the hurdle or hitting the bamboo stick. That is how the runner wins the prize. The obstacles often consist of a wall, sometimes tables, chairs, fences, mud puddles, and other things difficult to jump over.

As I have read these twenty-eight chapters of the book of Acts, I seem to see at least twenty-eight hurdles to be overcome by us as God's servants; and how wonderfully and perfectly the Holy Ghost moved through God's servants in different places, in overcoming every one of these hurdles—no man forbidding.

In previous days also, God had shown His prophets that they must continually expect Him to remove mountains. That was His way of confounding their adversaries, as we shall see in Isaiah 64.1-3.

"Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the water to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

When thou didst terrible things, which we looked not for,

thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence."

As long as we are conscious of God's abiding presence in His service, we will see every mountain flowing before His presence. Our purpose now, is to consider, not all, but a few of the obstacles placed before God's servants and how they went on jumping over hindrances, and saw the mountains flowing down, by the grace of God. We shall begin with:

Acts 1.10—"And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel."

That was the *first* hurdle that they had to overcome. The Lord Jesus Christ had been taken up into heaven—He was gone!

Those few disciples stood helplessly gazing toward heaven! The Lord had just commissioned them to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They knew that the Lord meant what He said, but He had left no detailed instructions of any kind—no plan—no blueprint to follow! So they were asking themselves: Where do we begin? What are we to do? Where shall we go? He could have laid down some rules by which they would have known immediately—so many days in Jerusalem; and so many days in Samaria, and so on; but He simply went off without writing any plans! The only thing He told them to do was to wait in Jerusalem for the power of the Holy Ghost to come upon them.

Numerically, they were very few—that was a great problem. But in addition to this, there were three other great mountains which were against them; and which they had to overcome.

- the nation of Jews who hated them.
- the political Roman rulers who kept them in bondage.
- the Greeks with their idiotrous culture.

Whenever we receive a message from God, or a charge of any kind, the first question we ask is, "How do we begin?" You may also be feeling that it is a very heavy responsibility, and that 'our case' is different. "We are finding these people too hard—we are troubled and don't know how to proceed—we would therefore like some clear directions." But God doesn't work that way.

In any work of God, do not suppose that because God worked in a certain way in England, America or in Madras, that He will do exactly the same in another place. God is not bound to our ideas or plans. He only wants us to wait patiently until He begins to move. To us it seems to be a very real problem, as it was in the case of the disciples (verse 11).

"Two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

They were so disturbed that He had gone; that their Lord Jesus had *gone*! They had been told plainly that the Lord Jesus Christ would be coming back again, and they had only to believe Him and wait, it might be for a short time, or a long time. That was not their business! They must go and wait, as they were told to wait, and in God's time, He would Himself tell them what to do next.

First of all we have to learn to wait for God's time. We have to wait patiently, for God has a time for every work, and He works in His own time. We must not move until we have received clear marching orders from the Lord; and certainly not the command of men.

When the work began in North India, we never pursued any plan of our own. We had no scheme, that first we must go and evangelize in the south, then north and Central India; We had no preference; and even then we had to pray again and again for the Lord to break our plans, take away our

own thoughts and ideas, and give us His plan. And when God's direction came, we went; regardless of the weather.

If God is speaking to you on any matter, then wait patiently. Don't go and discuss it and argue about it with your co-workers! They cannot help you. It is a personal matter between your own soul and God. Only we can know how God is dealing with us as individuals, and we have to learn how to wait patiently till the Lord's exact time arrives, as it surely will.

In the beginning, the question the disciples raised was: 'We are too few!' But here in the second chapter it is otherwise: 'We are too many!'

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (ch.2,41).

Now the *second* obstacle faces them: How to shepherd them; how to keep order; how to keep discipline?

If the work began small and grew slowly, then they could easily cope with it, and prepare for its needs; but this is so sudden, and the people so many! What shall we do about a building? What about accommodation? What about food?

The next verse gives the divine answer, and it has ever remained the governing principle upon which God works-- "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (verse 42).

Whether God gives us two souls or two thousand souls, the number is not the guiding factor. The scriptural principles are always the same, and God's servants were told how to establish His work, and how to make a proper provision for its growth.

You may emphasize the need for regular Bible study; and you may start cottage meetings, and put everybody to work witnessing, paying up their old debts, confessing their faults and sins to each other, and making bonfires of cigarettes,

bad books and idols; and yet the converts are not growing spiritually because you have failed to follow God's order. Note the God-given order: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine". It was the pure Word of God given without the adulteration of man's philosophy, or man's argument. For this reason, we compel people to read God's Word, and not so many other books. I am not disputing the value of the various literature services—they have good books. But I recommend that the Bible be read first of all. The believers must become familiar with the Word of God. They must learn of God's plan through His Word. That is what the apostles did. They drew attention to all that was written about the Lord Jesus Christ in the law and the prophets and the psalms.

Then comes *fellowship*. The apostle encouraged true fellowship, for fellowship is a strength to the believers. Believers should be encouraged to meet together as often as possible, to share with each other what the Lord has done for them.

By sharing together of God's faithfulness, we encourage each other, and grow spiritually. Why is it that people like to come for meetings, but they don't want to stay for fellowship? They prefer their 'tea' fellowships and 'coffee' fellowships, but, to my mind, this is not true fellowship.

Then the apostles began the *breaking of bread* straight-away. Wherever you are labouring, please don't fail to have gatherings for the breaking of bread, on the Lord's Day—even if there are just a few: your co-workers, friends or servants! Such times of fellowship are so wonderful, you will wish you could continue for the whole day! It is my feeling as well as my experience, that where people learn to take part in worship at the Lord's table, they give more generously, they suffer more gladly, they are not dependent upon preachers or preachings. Their eyes are drawn away from things, men, and weather conditions. Their eyes are upon the Lord.

We have found to our joy, that in the villages where we have begun worship gatherings, only a short while ago, the believers are progressing happily and spiritually. At first they could not even read the Bible, but now how they pray! how they worship! and they have learned to give joyfully, even though they are so poor!

People do not learn how to give by hearing a good sermon on tithing, but they learn how to give, because they have first learned the secret of worshipping the Lord.

I have been asked again and again, "How are you able to meet the need?" I tell them, "We cannot meet the need! We have gone into villages among very poor people, and yet the Lord supplies through them. Then we have found that it is only because they have first learned how to worship. How interesting it is to see their shyness vanish and tongues that were tied being loosened. They also testify boldly in the open air; simply because they have seen the Lord in worship."

Similarly they learn to pray for each other, and with each other, remembering that by prayer and supplication we make all our needs known to God.

I request of you, please do not be afraid of criticism by having breaking of bread. Don't fear what your friends of other denominations may say. Of course, they will not understand! They may never ask you again to preach! Thank God for that! We are never bound to any particular place, or church building, for our ministry. What the Lord has opened, no man can shut. We must be faithful to the heavenly vision.

Now for the *third* obstacle, let us turn to Acts 3:6: "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none".

No money! What a confession for a man of God to have to make! And yet he does not say so apologetically, as I have heard so many missionaries do! Some are always begging: "We have no funds—Please give—We are depending upon you!" They say they have faith, but their faith is in

their country and their friends. I think that is why they look so longingly for the postman to come and bring the mail, thinking: 'Is there going to be something for me?' I think it is a shameful thing to do! We must take our eyes off our friends and relatives, and look only to the Lord. He has every right to meet the need through any persons He wishes.

Peter is joyful because he already has the answer: "Such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." This is the way he overcame the barrier. We too may use the authority and power of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When God first spoke to me concerning His service, it was half-past two in the morning. He made it very clear that if I wanted to be His servant, then I should withdraw all claim from any property in the Punjab; I was never to join a mission or a society; and I was never to hint or speak of any financial or material need. After that I was only to look to God. I gladly submitted to these conditions, though I knew nothing about the life of faith.

Then as I began to think of returning to India, and its poverty, the Lord assured me that He was the same everywhere and in every country. With that faith I came back. I did not know how God would supply my need; there were many months when I had food; but sometimes I was hungry.

It does not matter how great the need, whether personal or for great campaigns. We have had as many as sixty, or a hundred in our party when we have gone on Gospel raids; we have travelled for many miles to places where we were unknown; yet He has met our needs. On the other hand for some reason He would sometimes withhold; that we might learn to trust Him at all times.

The question is, Are you sure you are in God's will? Are you in God's plan? If so, the matter is settled, and God is committed to it!

One day a man came to me and told me he had rent to pay, but he had no money. I prayed for him and asked God to supply his need. The Lord told me, "You are keeping that twelve rupees in your box, give that to him". I said, "But no, that is my train fare to Ajmer. I have promised to attend that convention on Thursday, and if I give it away, I cannot go". The Lord spoke to me again, "That money is Mine; not yours". So I gave the money to the man. Thursday came; train time came; but no money came! So I took my suit-case and went down to the station. While I was standing there, a man came near and asked, "Are you Bakht Singh? Someone told me to give this to you, anonymously". He went away. I pulled out just enough money to pay for my fare!

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we overcome barriers. We say that we have faith, but when the test comes, we really do not believe; so God takes us through the testing time to give us faith; that we may know the power of His Name.

In chapter 4 we find the *fourth* obstacle to be of a *different* kind. (verse 16):

"What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."

This obstacle came from the civil authorities. They were afraid of the influence which the apostles had over the people. They were forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus. But in spite of their threatenings, the apostles continued to testify boldly in the Holy Ghost that, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard; are we justified in keeping quiet?" They judged things that were right in the *sight of God* and not men.

Let me ask you, are you justified in keeping quiet concerning any spiritual truth which God has shown you? We often face this difficulty. We are warned by church members and nominal Christians, not to speak upon certain doctrines in their church or they may say: "We will not allow you to speak any more in our building if you are going to speak that way." What do you do in such a case? Are you just diplomatic and say, "Yes, yes, we don't want to cause any difficulty in the congregation", thinking that you may have a better chance of ministry by doing so?

It is by authority in the Holy Ghost we have better results! If people do not want God's Word, it is up to them; you are freed from your responsibility. But you must give God's message whatever it may be. What God says to me, I intend to declare. But I must say it in love; I must say it in meekness.

One day in South India, a man came to me and asked if I would give a fifteen-minute message. I said, "No, I have only God's message, and I cannot give you any promise".

I always pray that the Lord will give me His message, and take away my own words and thoughts. Then in His power, grace and authority, I can give that message without any apology or hindrance.

Now turn to Acts 5, 17 to see the *fifth* obstacle:

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (that is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."

The council had now fulfilled their threats, and put the apostles in prison—to punish them, of course. We find that God does not always use supernatural means to protect us, but He did in this case. He took the responsibility for their obedience, and overcame the obstacles immediately.

"The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in

the temple to the people all the words of this life." (verse 19).

In 1947, in West Pakistan, there was a time when the Muslims began to kill the Hindus—they wanted to kill the Christians also. So three nights in succession these Muslims came with their weapons to attack the people of Martinpurwa. The Christians were hiding in the fields here and there, and could see that they were coming every night, but didn't dare to come near. On the fourth night, they sent a message of apology saying, "We have been coming to attack your village for the last three nights, but every time we came near, we saw a man on a white horse, with a drawn sword, and we couldn't proceed further. Please forgive us." This actually happened.

If there is to be any persecution or suffering of any kind, we believe our Lord is able, and knows how to protect His own. There is no need to be anxious, worried and troubled. If we believe Him, He will protect us.

When the missionaries were being turned out of China, some missionaries in India appealed to Lord Salisbury, who was the Viceroy of India, and asked him why he didn't send his armies to protect the missionaries in China. I do not remember the exact words he used, but he asked them what they were doing there. Of course, they told him that they were commissioned to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To that he replied, "If the Lord Jesus Christ is unable to defend the missionaries, what can my army do?" He was an unsaved man!

We must not depend upon earthly powers for protection. We must depend upon the Lord. We must not depend upon any country and their promises and hopes for protection. They will fail. We only believe in God's faithfulness.

In the last great war, many testified of how the Lord had kept them safely, when the bombs were falling outside.

During the recent flood in Poona, more than a lakh of

people were affected. The wall of the flood-water was about thirty feet high coursing down towards the city of Poona at the speed of forty-seven miles an hour. On the other side of the river was a large lake—so there was no escape. Many thousands of people were literally washed away; but we discovered afterwards, that every believer was safe. Near the new bridge, there were ten rows of buildings in which two families of believers were living. We saw with our own eyes, how the buildings had fallen completely, and there was the only one standing. How it happened, we don't know! There was a Christian orphanage nearby, surrounded with water, yet everyone inside was safe.

So I believe that in times of calamity, God manifests His supernatural power to protect His own. We must believe in His faithfulness—that is how the early believers overcame their obstacles.

Now in the next chapter, we shall consider the *sixth* obstacle of murmuring. See Acts 6.1: "In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

Whenever a work of God increases there are bound to be murmurers in every congregation. The Greeks were tempted to feel that there was partiality shown toward the Jews, while their own needs were being neglected. It was a very difficult barrier, but how did they overcome it?

The apostles called the congregation together and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

You might think it is a God-given responsibility to serve tables, but the apostles recognized that their first commitment was to the ministry of the Word and prayer; and under no circumstances must they leave that, in order to serve tables.

Many of us are tempted in the same way, and the devil often succeeds in making us forsake the first job for the second. Men who have been commanded of God to preach, and anointed by the Holy Ghost to proclaim and teach His Word, are now serving tables. These men say, "Somebody has to do it! If I don't do it, who will?"

The question remains—Did God call you to serve tables, or did He call you to teach the Word? You must find this out for yourself. If God has called you to minister the Word, then don't be carried away by what seem to be 'important' duties.

When I came to India, I faced this problem also. My father was involved in a high-court case in the Punjab, and suffered the loss of more than a lakh of rupees. He turned to me, and told me that the family were counting on my help, as an elder son; and that I was to find a job for at least three months. He appealed to me for the sake of the younger brothers, and said that the relatives at least would be happy. I told my father that I knew clearly God had called to me to preach the Gospel. I have already spoken of the struggle which lasted for two years, when God finally made me willing to yield to Him my life, time and energy for the Gospel; and I told my father that if I disobeyed my God he would suffer more loss.

I said to my father, "I can't give you any help. I cannot keep you from dangers, but the Lord can. Your safety lies in my obedience. If I obey my Lord, I know that eventually you will all be blessed—I believe in God." With that, my mother began to weep; and my father began to weep, and taking off his turban and laying it at my feet, he said, "Not even for a few months?" Again, I said firmly, "No, God must come first; one day all of your trouble will be over through my obedience."

Now, when I return to the Punjab, my relatives express their gratitude to me for my obedience through which they have been so abundantly blessed. Everyone in the family has

been richly blessed—more than you can imagine! And they say, "It is because of prayer that we are what we are." The result is, that I have an open entrance for the Gospel in every home. They sit up till midnight in the hope that I will give God's message when I come.

At the very first, I confess, it was a great temptation to yield to the pleas of the family! I know many missionaries who under similar pressures have lost their calling, and are spending their time doing 'good' things, but not fulfilling their calling. But we all can overcome that barrier, through faith and waiting upon God in prayer.

Let us proceed to the *seventh* obstacle and consider the barrier of being falsely accused. Read Acts 7,54,55.

"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

This man of God, Stephen, was full of the Holy Ghost; and he proved it in the way in which he patiently endured such accusation and cruelty. He allowed them to do what they wanted. He ignored their false charges. He gave no word of retaliation. He forgave, praying: "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."

In the work of the Lord, it doesn't matter how cautious and careful we may be—we are bound to be falsely accused, and have horribly unkind things said to us; even by our co-workers, who sometimes rise against us. We argue the hours away, in our own defence. We waste time writing letters to prove and clear ourselves. But we never succeed that way! Stephen forgave them!

Some years ago, two or three men got together and issued a paper in which they wrote some horrible and untrue charge against me. Later, I found out about this but I determined that I would always speak nicely to them, and

always pray for them. After three or four months one of them came and held my hand. He said, "Brother, can you give me five minutes?" I told him, "Please don't ask me for time. I have already forgiven you!" He insisted that he must explain everything; but I assured him I knew exactly who had done it, and that I knew it a long time ago! I also added that no weapon of man would ever prosper against me. "This is my faith", I said, "you may say anything you like against me. it will never harm me. If I am in the right, I know that my Lord will defend me. That is why I forgave you the very same day I heard about it; and I have also prayed for you. I have learned to pray for my enemies". The man broke down and pleaded for forgiveness.

If you find in your area or community, men of this type—just forgive them! They are the devil's agents. Don't waste any more time defending yourself, but like Stephen—forgive them. They are put to shame in this way—come to themselves; and apologize. That is how to overcome the barrier.

Shall we go further into chapter 8, for the *eighth* obstacle.

Verse 12—"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Verse 14—"When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John."

This may not appear like a problem, but there is definitely the barrier of nationality arising here. This is a problem which we find everywhere. Were the Samaritan believers entitled to receive the same love and recognition as the Jewish believers? In a very subtle way the devil would create a big barrier of a communal nature—Americans and Indians; educated and uneducated; rich and poor people; Brahman converts and outcaste converts, and all sorts of distinctions and parties.

Now God knew that it would be that way; and that is

why He sent the apostles from Jerusalem to Samaria, when the Samaritans believed in the Lord Jesus Christ through Philip, that they might see for themselves that the very same gift, which God had given to them at Jerusalem, was given to the Samaritans also—there is no difference. My warning is—be careful of distinctions—don't yield to the pride of nationality. You will only lose ground—you will only have strife!

We must as far as possible remain as one family—as one fellowship. Unless we work as one family, the devil is sure to bring in some communal strife. In some places, they have a Hindi service and an English service. To my mind this is wrong. It makes divisions. In our experience, we have always refused this distinction, and we have worked on the principle of giving God's message in English with as many interpreters as are necessary, with the view to maintaining this oneness of living together and serving together; and overcoming every barrier together.

The *ninth* obstacle is contained in the ninth chapter. Beginning at verse 31 to the end of the chapter, we have an account of Peter being used of God in performing miracles. But here also I want you to see a very big obstacle—a mountain in the heart of Peter. But Peter himself was not aware of this barrier, perhaps because God was blessing his ministry so greatly. It was something that others also couldn't see. It was known throughout the country that he was a man of God. But God knew that Peter was limping in his ministry because of his pride; so unless God did a new work in Peter He could not use him fully; and He could not send him to the house of Cornelius.

Now please watch how God broke this barrier. In verse 43 it says that "It came to pass that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner." Peter probably came for one day. You will see from the story that, to visit Joppa, where he raised Tabitha back to life again, was not in his plan—a messenger was sent to Lydda to bring him. God changed any plan that Peter might have had.

From chapter 10 we can see clearly how God delayed His servant for a special purpose, though unknown to Peter. God was preparing a man in Caesarea, called Cornelius, at the same time. When He appeared to Cornelius, He revealed to him the exact place where Peter was staying; and instructed him to send men to fetch Peter. So in verses 7 to 10 we see God's perfect plan being fulfilled:

"And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city; Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: and he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance."

It was the day that dinner was very late, and Peter became very hungry. This delay was also in God's plan. And while he waited on the housetop, praying, he saw this vision and heard the voice saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat!" It was God breaking in on Peter's pride. It was pride speaking: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean"—as though God would ask anyone to do anything wrong! God showed him three times before Peter was willing to obey. But now, God was able to use him to take His message to the house of Cornelius.

That is how God had to prepare Peter before He could use him in a fuller way. Now, don't you be deceived about your ministry. Like Peter, we may be used mightily, and thank God for it; but God wants to do so much more.

Now let us turn to Acts 11:19:

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

The people had to be scattered so that they could take the life of the Lord Jesus Christ wherever they went. The barrier was, that they gave preference to the Jewish community, and they neglected to go further afield to the

Gentiles. It was persecution that scattered them abroad.

It was through persecution that the Gospel came to the Grecians in Antioch, and through famine, God shifted the centre from Jerusalem to Antioch.

God is showing that He is not going to keep Himself bound to Jerusalem, even though the work began there; and even though the apostles and other good people were still there. He is not dependent upon the money and talents of America and England—He is not bound to any country! He can shift His centres and He will go on shifting, until we are brought into His plan.

In verse 27, we see another possible danger—the danger of being exclusive.

“In these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.”

God had done a mighty work in Antioch through the ministry of Saul and Barnabas and here was a real temptation for the believers to say, “Brothers Saul and Barnabas, you stay here; you must not leave; we need you here”. This was quite true, because the whole city was in deep need. They all believed, and they needed to be helped and shepherded. But God sent a famine to Jerusalem. That is how God overcame that barrier!

According to Acts 12.1-5 the apostles came into a very grave situation in Jerusalem but they were also brought there by God to see the unceasing prayer meeting going on in the church.

In their poverty they were praying; in their trouble they were praying and the apostles also returned with that same burden for prayer. Outwardly, they came with relief for the poor saints, but in reality they came to receive this spiritual blessing.

On returning they declared to the believers in Antioch the mighty things God was doing by prayer. That same spirit was communicated to the believers, and while they were at

prayer, they heard the Lord speak: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work." The church had to obey; they could not hold the apostles for themselves any longer! Thus we find new doors being opened for the gospel throughout Europe and Asia.

Many men of God are held in positions by human pressures, by human reasoning, while God has some other work for them to do. In times like these God may have to send a famine, persecution and other difficulties, in order that we go upon our knees and prevail in prayer, and that we may also hear Him say, 'Separate me so-and-so for the work'.

Now please study all twenty-eight chapters and you will see the apostles and believers overcoming twenty-eight obstacles under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Finally the last words of chapter twenty-eight—"No man forbidding him"—show so completely how every barrier was fully overcome--mountains flowing down at His presence, and believers coming out triumphantly.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHRIST OF GLORY

"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last." (Rev. 1, 17).

As we see the end time approaching we should read the book of Revelation again and again. We are enjoined to do so in verse 3, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy". The message of the book is for the final days, and we do well to heed the warnings, because we are already living in the end times.

We may not fully understand the Lord's message in this book; and we may also have various interpretations of the different passages, but it will not make much difference. The main thing is that we carefully and prayerfully read it on our knees, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. In this way you will receive great blessing, as well as be found prepared for that day of glory when the Lord Jesus comes.

The message of this book is especially written to those who want to overcome. If we do not have the desire to overcome, God will not force us; but it is plain that He wants us to overcome, for that is why the phrase "he that overcometh" is repeated seven times in the second and third chapters, and in other places also. If you really want to overcome the attacks of the evil one and all his wiles, you will find the application of these divine principles effective for triumphant living.

For this reason, I feel constrained to exhort you to read this book as much as possible, first to help others. May I

simply suggest for your own study, to divide this book into seven parts. You will see the Lord Jesus Christ giving a seven-fold glimpse of His glory:

Chapter 1 gives a glimpse of *the glory of His Person*. Who is He? What is He? We may have seen Him on many occasions, but He is so great and wonderful that it will take eternity to see and know Him as He is.

Chapters 2-3 show *His glory revealed in His Church upon the earth*. The Lord is moving and working in and through His Church upon the earth despite the devil's very fierce attacks. I can suggest at least forty-nine messages in these two chapters by dividing and sub-dividing.

In chapters 4-5, we have a glimpse of *the glory of the Heavenly Church*. It is a revelation of what we are going to be when we are taken up to be with Himself.

Chapters 6-9 reveal a glimpse of *the glory of His throne*. He is seen judging from His throne on behalf of His saints.

Chapter 20: The last part of this chapter shows *the glory of His great white throne*. This is the time when Christ will judge all peoples and nations who now refuse Him and walk in darkness.

Chapters 21-22: In these we have a seven-fold glimpse of the glory of the new creation, "Behold, I make all things new" (verse 5).

This book is the book of Glory—*the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ*. He is the Prince of Peace and also the God of Glory. If you divide up this book into seven parts, you will find it simple to study. Proceed very slowly, and do not be in any hurry.

My purpose now is not to study the whole book, but only to share a few hints from the first chapters.

John the apostle was the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. This man of God, became a prisoner for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ in his old

age. This was the year A.D.95. Patmos is a very barren looking island about 60 miles distant from Ephesus.

John the apostle was there alone, with many questions sweeping through his mind because of the situation concerning all the saints of God. For 60 years he had watched the work of God grow and the Word of God increase and prevail, but now a sudden persecution had arisen against the Christians. Many were cast into prison; many were killed; many were scattered and driven out of their homes by force; and many like Demas went back for the sake of the world. Even to the church at Ephesus, the Lord had to say, "Thou hast left thy first love". This was the very first place where Apollos had laboured, and Paul also had laboured, then Timothy, and afterwards, John. The believers there had been well taught. But even they had become cold. That is why the apostle is filled with puzzling questions.

Now the great question he is asking God is: "Lord, why art Thou so silent? Why the scattering, the falling away, the back-sliding? Why are there so few of the Lord's shining witnesses remaining? Lord, please give me the answer!"

God had the answer. I feel God's Word shows us that when we come to the end time, the devil will become very active, extremely active—particularly against God's servants. He may come very cunningly through sickness and tragedy, strife and coldness of heart, but he also comes in great fury. That is why John was feeling so downcast and discouraged. Even though we have worked so hard, prayed so much, and seen so much happening, in the end days we are bound to see all kinds of adversity, persecution arising, and many going back—and many other things which we cannot explain.

This book contains not only historical facts, which are interesting no doubt; but I see much more than that. I see in the book divine principles being revealed for our use, that we may know how to face the enemy and defeat him. He may have wily methods, but he is a defeated foe. He may

come in great fury, but he will not harm us if we know how to depend upon the Lord's weapons, and not our own.

The first thing we see is, that the Lord gave John a vision of Himself. Are you feeling downcast? Are you discouraged in your field of labour? Are you facing problems among your co-workers? Let me give you a hint: Ask the Lord to give you a new glimpse of His Glory. There is no other method.

Now we see the Lord appearing to John in a new way. John had seen the Lord transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration—what a privilege!

He had seen Him ascending into Glory. He could have asked Him any questions on earth—he knew the Lord so well! But now, we find him given such a sight of the Lord, that he had never had before. It was on the Lord's Day, and John was in the Spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ appears to John from behind and speaks to him. There was a divine purpose in this. It was as though He was saying to His servant, "I knew your questions very well; I know you are discouraged; I know you have many questions to ask, but John, look in the right direction—you are looking in the wrong direction".

In all his sincerity, his eyes had been drawn away from the Lord to see situations. You see, when difficulties increase, and problems become complex, and things become strangely mixed, we tend to see only the problems: they come in letters, in conversation, and everywhere you go, there is never any end of problems. They are complex, so don't waste time on them! The Lord Jesus says, "Turn about and look at me, and not at your problems. I know them". The Lord knows our problems. He knows that we cannot solve them. So when you feel downcast and confused about the future, and even your work for Him, He wants you to learn to turn about, and see Him in a new way.

John says that he heard a voice behind him, and being turned, he saw something. It is true that we need the Lord

more than anything else. You would have thought that John's eyes would have caught a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the first thing he saw was the seven golden candlesticks. It may be that the apostle had not yet understood what kind of Church the Lord Jesus Christ was building; but these golden candlesticks represent the Church—the true Church of Jesus Christ.

The Lord is not primarily concerned with multitudes. His work is not dependent upon numbers. It is not dependent upon our activities. Of course we feel happy when we see large numbers coming for the meetings. When we see a large audience, we get inspiration to preach. We feel we can give a better report, and we think we can get greater results. But the Lord is not after results! Nowhere does He tell us to bring the multitude to Him. The Lord wants a pure Church, a spiritual Church—a heavenly Church—not numbers!

We may get joy and pleasure by seeing large numbers and many conversions outwardly. But what about the future? They may fall away! The Lord, in essence, was saying to John, "Don't be too disturbed by what goes on; people come and go, but I am building my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". The first thing is, God want pure gold—not numbers. Whether it is small or great—He wants gold. A small quantity of gold is much more precious than tons of oil or rock. He wants us to go and gather gold. So when the persecution arose, that was God's way of refining the gold. Persecution is God's fire. He had to bring the 'mixture' into the fire to refine it.

If you were to go to the Kolar gold fields in South India, you would see the stone in those gold mines. It has to be first broken, and then crushed into powder. Then the gold has to be melted and refined by many fires.

God allows refining among believers, to refine them and to purify them until they become pure gold. What a pity that we do not know how much mixture, how much rubbish

is brought into the work of God! The devil cannot withstand a pure work of God! If we continue to work under the Lord's control and guidance, then He will win in every trial, suffering and persecution; and that is how His gold becomes more pure.

Do we understand what kind of a Church the Lord is building? Is He building a society? or a mission? or a fellowship? No, He is building a pure Church—a Church with a true foundation where His Life can flow and His Light can shine. The golden candlesticks give pure light—no smoke of any kind! You see some people smoking like hurricane-lamps. They have mixed motives. They cannot give a pure light. So we have to wait patiently until His perfect plan is revealed.

In verse 13, John sees our Lord dressed in a long, high-priestly garment. He had seen Him before as Jesus of Nazareth, and later as the Lord ascending into heaven, but he had never seen Him as the heavenly High Priest. Why does He appear in this way?

His presence as High Priest in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks speaks of the intercessory ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. This also is the hope of those who have fallen. He prays for them as their Advocate. He is able to save those who had gone astray, "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." He does not condemn them—He prays for them. He will lift them up, raise them up and restore them. Even for Demas who had forsaken the Lord and His work, the Lord Jesus continues to intercede until he is restored.

As co-workers with the Lord Jesus Christ, we too have to learn to intercede. We often see God's servants bitterly attacked by Satan through various temptations. They find the enemy too cunning, and slip and fall. What should we do? Shall we condemn them? Shall we entirely forsake them? No, Christ is interceding for them. We must also learn to intercede.

Some time ago, a man came to me in tears saying, "Brother, pray for my wife and my daughter—they have both forsaken me and run off with someone else". So I prayed for him, and the man went away. After a while, I felt convicted that I did not feel sorrow in my heart. I could not truthfully say that I was praying as I would pray for my own mother or sister. So I travailed for them that night, praying that God's burden might come heavily upon me and that I might prevail for these two souls who had gone astray. After a few hours of prayer, I received the assurance from the Lord that my prayer was answered. Next morning after our Bible Study, I was told that two women had come to see me. I saw that they were the ones for whom I had prayed. They said, "Brother, we don't know why we have come to see you, but when we had already gone two miles on the road, we felt someone constraining us to come here, and ask for prayer". They began to weep bitterly; and to confess their sin and shame. Since that day, I have seen a real change in them.

So it is that by our priestly ministry of intercession for those of our co-workers who have fallen, that God brings victory and restores them to Himself.

May I humbly beseech you, do not condemn. It is not our business to judge our brother. Nor be discouraged yourself, but ask someone else to pray with you. We have found again and again, that after a day of fasting the Lord gave us praise. I feel very strongly these days that we need a burden for prayer.

Now if you look at Revelation 1,14-17, you will notice seven features pictured of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you study them, seek the Lord that He may speak to you and show you the meaning of each, one by one:

His head and hair, white like wool,
His eyes as a flame of fire,
His feet like unto fine brass,

His voice like the sound of many waters,
His right hand holding seven stars,
His countenance as the sun shining in his strength,
Out of his mouth, a sharp two-edged sword.

When you have finished studying these, you will not only have seven messages, but you will have a further glimpse of His glory.

Your heart will have a new prayer, and a new determination to see Him as He is. That will answer all your questions.

One day a man came to me and said, "Brother, I have thirty-five questions to ask you". I told him I was very sorry that I did not have time just then, but I encouraged him to stay with us for two or three days, and then I would give some time to answer his questions, as it would take at least two hours. He agreed to stay. When I was ready, I said, "Now you may please bring your paper and questions". He said, "I do not have any questions left now; when you were speaking, all my questions disappeared."

When you see the Lord face to face, He will answer every question of yours. It does not matter how complicated your problems may be, they will disappear when you get a new glimpse of Him and His glory. Then you too like John will fall down at His feet.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1

According to your message, what steps should evangelical missions in India take in order that the glory of God might be manifested?

Answer:

The first thing we should ask ourselves is: "Are we really anxious to see God's glory according to God's Word?"

There are people praying with a burden, everywhere. Some say, "Lord send a revival". Others pray for a renewal in the work, or for a quickening. But beneath it all there is a common consciousness of a genuine lack—something missing. In other words, they want something which they have not got!

Now all of us can begin to pray. We will never agree as a group—it is a personal matter, because only those who are prepared to pay the price can labour in this way. If you want a manifestation of His glory, you must be prepared to pay the price, as Hannah did.

This is how the Lord began to deal with me in the beginning. In my travels here and there, I saw spiritual barrenness; and God gave me a burden to pray. I lost all desire for food, sleep and for everything else as I prayed. My burden was to see God work fully: "Lord, I know Thou canst work; Thy Word says so; and I believe it".

If you are sincere in your questions, you will find that God will give you also a burden to prevail in prayer. It may be for whole nights, or whole days. God will show you how

you can become His partner like Hannah, Samuel, David or Solomon. It may be that you can be all four of these, but if not, you must be ready and satisfied to share in His burden in whatever way He shows you.

I don't think that we can accomplish much as a group. It is a message which can only be accepted by those who are definitely burdened to see God's glory revealed. Whatever God shows you, you must take your share. If God commands you to spend more time in prayer then by all means do so. If God shows you something from His Word be faithful in fulfilling it and sharing it with your co-workers.

Question 2

Do you consider it possible for foreign missionaries working in present-day India to establish a local church or assembly which is indigenous and which functions in the New Testament pattern?

Answer:

I do not consider anyone 'foreign' in the first instance. God brings a man from any country and we receive him as God's messenger. We do not receive him as 'American' or 'English' or 'Japanese'. In the second instance, not everyone can establish a 'church'. It is only those who have the apostolic ministry--the apostolic calling and experience--that God uses in this way; and they may be from any country. In the book of Acts we see that God used men from different places. He was not bound to choose men from Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus or Colosse. Those whom He called, He anointed for this particular task. It is not a question of national or foreign. God can use anybody who responds to His calling. We may preach or we may teach but that will not establish a 'church'--it is not that easy. Do you desire that gift?

Question 3

The principle that God works more fully through the

Church, as a body of believers, than through independent believers working separately, is clear from Scripture. However, there are indications from Church history which show that there is just as much dynamic working through men whom God uses, and who function quite independently, such as Paul the apostle and other men of God. We see that after Paul's initial missionary journey, there is scarcely any time when he consults a local or a sending church for his moves, and there are no signs of church submission as taught today. He consults his team, if anybody, but he usually goes on his own guidance.

Answer:

Yes, I agree with you that it is a general Scriptural principle that God works more fully through the church—the body of believers. The Scripture is clear—so why not believe it? I have no doubt about it. But I have never said that God cannot use men functioning independently. I have said many times that God is sovereign and He can use anybody—even Balaam; but that is not proof that a man is perfect before God. It is possible that God could work through me and bring many souls to Himself, and there may be great outward results, but there may be in me something that God does not like.

Do not confuse these two issues. Of course God can use, and is using teachers and preachers and men of God of every country to expound the Scriptures and to win souls, but I emphasize that if you want to know God's fulness working through the Church, then you must come into God's plan—there is no other way.

Now the question is, 'Am I independent by nature or by God's command?' There are some people who remain independent because they find it difficult to work with others—they are happier on their own, and yet they are good people. Can you say truthfully that God has called you to be independent? My own experience has been that after working alone for seven years making my own plans, I now prefer to

work in a team—usually of 10 or 12 people. I never knew how to enjoy the prayer fellowship of the whole Church, but since then it has been a source of strength to work in co-operation with others. It means so much to me now to have the prayer fellowship of the churches, and I know I have been saved from many mistakes by their prayers. As a church we pray together and the Lord gives us wonderful times of blessing, more than I have ever known before. But please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that no one is being used apart from us. We pray for God's people everywhere, but when it comes to building a church—it must be according to God's plan.

To answer the second part of your question, I feel it is a very forceful statement to make in saying that Paul did not consult the local church or group after he finished his missionary journeys. You see, the Bible does not give all the details. In the first place, it was Paul who so emphatically and faithfully instructed the early churches in these divine principles; and would he therefore not carry them out himself? Would he himself not want to be an example of these things? Now there have been circumstances in which he was not able to consult the church, and there may be in our case also when we have nobody to pray with. But then we are not under law but under grace. If we cannot consult our co-workers in person, then we may surely do so by letter.

When the work began in Jerusalem there did not seem to be any church order, and at that time you will find Barnabas and Saul moving about on their own. It was only at Antioch that the church order was made clear, and it was from there that they moved forward under the direct influence of the church.

Throughout the epistles we find Paul appealing to the church to pray for him:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together

with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed." (Romans 15. 30-32).

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel." (Eph.6.19).

"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." (Col.4.3.4).

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith." (II Thess.3.1.2).

From these Scriptures it is clear that Paul was always counting upon and asking for the prayer fellowship of the churches. When we seek prayer fellowship, it does not mean that we are bound by the opinions of others, it simply means that we value that fellowship in prayer. Our safety is in being upheld by the whole Church fellowship. They must know what we are doing, and we must communicate with the whole Church, not just one man. That is what Paul did.

Question 4

We are doing medical work, and frequently we pray for patients. The patients are Hindus and Moslems who are happy to have us pray for them, but who do not have a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. How far can we expect God to answer prayer for their healing, that the glory may be to the Name of Christ? When they have no faith, can we expect God to heal them?

Answer:

That depends upon our faith and not upon their faith

only. It seems in many cases that our Lord went on healing people even though they had no faith. In our case I feel we should pray for their healing as well as for their salvation. I know that they come only for the sake of the body, but I generally pray for the disease of both body and soul. That is our privilege because our Lord is the loving Creator, and in His mercy He heals their diseases, and delivers them from trouble even though they do not call upon Him.

Question 5

In the instance of a nucleus of christians in a little village, far from contact with the outside world, how would you suggest they go about establishing elders? Who establishes elders? Paul could appoint various ones to go here and there to ordain elders but if there is no one of the status of Paul, how would it be possible in a village?

Answer:

Generally speaking, the persons through whom a work begins are responsible for its growth. If we cannot ourselves fulfill this ministry we must continue to solicit the prayers of other groups of believers that 'the Lord may raise up someone to shepherd them'. Through their prayers God will make full provision and will send someone to stay with them long enough to help them out. It is a divine principle that God never forsakes His sheep, and He expects His co-workers to ask Him, and to claim His promise to shepherd His flock; and He will.

Question 6

In the Scriptures we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature. To that extent we can safely say that the need of the lost world constitutes the call to the whole world. As you know, the evangelization of the entire world has been the emphasis of the WEC over the years. I accept that as a basic proposition but I understand that your experience has been more to evangelize where one is defi-

nitely sure that God has already been preparing the way. Could you share your personal thoughts along that line?

Answer:

First of all I believe that the command to preach and teach is a full command. They go together and must never be separated. Recognizing this dual responsibility we have gone into the villages.

It was in Sindh that I began my work. I was alone; and it was the most difficult and backward part of India. Very few have ever ventured to go into the streets and villages of Sindh—it is such a hard place. I felt the need for help and for fellowship, so I began to ask the Lord. He sent me some co-workers. We worked together, prayed together and shared fellowship in the things of the Lord. We used to pray for hours remembering the christians by their names and praying for revival among nominal christians. God has a certain time for every place and He kept us there for five years. By that time we had about thirty invitations to campaigns in the north of India in various places. I was expecting to go north until God spoke to me very clearly one morning and told me to go south. I had no desire to go south; furthermore, there was no invitation from anyone to go south. But that morning a letter came from Madras inviting us to come to Madras. I wrote back and told them that I would pray more before I would give the final reply. I wanted to be doubly sure of His leading. We prayed and the Lord confirmed His word to us to go south.

It was in 1938 we went south to a certain town for three weeks. We began to have all-nights of prayer and continued for 19 nights, and from 12 midnight to 5 in the morning. We travailed and the Lord revealed to us His pattern in dividing up India into different sections; and we sensed at that time that there was more of a burden for the south than for the north. However, it was always a struggle for me to remain in the south—I was always longing to be in the north, primarily because of the language difficulty. We never

thought of it nor desired it, but the Lord always seemed to be pushing us to go south. We had to obey the Lord for we could see that the Lord will not be governed by our own ideas and desires.

We have never initiated a campaign in any place, nor written to anyone asking for meetings, nor have we been guided by the map. Let me give you a simple illustration of how another door was opened to us.

A letter came from Vellore from a young girl who wanted baptism. This letter had followed me for three months from place to place, so first of all I apologized for not being able to come earlier: but I went to her place and talked with her. Then I spoke to the mother, "Are you sure that your daughter is taking the right step?" She assured me that the girl was born again and added "I am very happy that she is going to testify to it in baptism". After that I enquired, "This is all very good but what about you? If you think that your daughter is doing the right thing then you must follow that way yourself—God doesn't make any exceptions". In our conversation she told me there was going to be a cottage meeting and warmly extended an invitation for me to come. To that meeting many of the staff of the Medical College and Hospital of Vellore came, and from this I could see how God's time had come for Vellore. The Lord's Word came to me clearly, 'Don't delay, hire a house, and have a campaign'.

Similarly, such invitations have come for us to enter Poona; invitations from Assam to enter the large open door among the Lushai, Naga and other tribes-people.

The Poona door opened to us without our making any plans—we were just available. Four of us were there. A man came to see me on Saturday and said, "We have no speaker for tomorrow in our church building, will you give God's message to us tomorrow?" We prayed about it and accepted the invitation. A very large crowd came despite the fact that there had been no previous announcement—and within

three days we gave out over a thousand decision cards. Six hundred and seven decision cards were signed by people who had accepted the Lord as their Saviour. At that time too the Lord indicated that His time had come to work in Poona and so we took a house and began to teach them the Bible.

We have prayed much for the north, and now our feeling is that God is moving and that His time is approaching to work in the north. We can't say where—it may be in Lucknow or in some other place.

In Guntur it happened this way. I was in Bellu and God told me to go to Guntur. I went there but only for a few hours. I was having prayer at the station when two men came up behind me and said, "We have been sent to you by some Hindus from a village about forty miles away. There are about 30 people wanting baptism. Could you come and baptize them?" I told them I would pray about it and sent a friend there first to confirm the facts. After two months we went there as a party. Now there is a small group of believers there. They have their own place of worship. Also in a neighbouring town there are 30 to 40 believers who gather every week for worship, and the believers themselves are now being used of the Lord to open up the way for us.

These are illustrations of how we seek to fulfil the command to evangelize and teach under the Holy Spirit's direction.

Question 7

(a) My question has to do with Indian co-workers. As a mission we are trusting the Lord to send us Indian co-workers who would be willing to come and work with us on the 'faith' basis, the same as we are. Other missions have Indian helpers but they pay them a salary.

(b) What about those working where there is no Church?

Answer:

(a) That is the mistake—that you are working as a

mission. People who come to work in a mission naturally expect to be paid. That is commonly understood by all Indians. But if you work on the Church basis, they are more likely to come in on a faith basis. That is why we do not approve of missions, nor do we ever make appeals for workers.

(b) You see, by working on a Church basis you may expect God to give gifts to the church (not to the mission) as He did in the early church. You must ask Him to give workers, whether they are from the north, the south or anywhere. This is in accordance with His order found in Ephesians 4.11,12. These are the gifts which God wants to give to the church. Any other way is simply an employer/employee basis.

Question 8

Since every church is either independent or of some kind of denomination—and even the most independent groups are joined together by some kind of federation what are the marks one should look for to decide whether a church is a true church or not?

Answer:

Marks? This is a hard thing to say. We cannot go by things that appear true. Really the only way a person can determine the true motive of a group is to live with them. On the other hand we find groups that are sincere but they lack teaching. It is only by living and seeking fellowship with them that we can be sure that they want to be governed by the Holy Spirit—that is a clear working motive. Are they honouring the Lord by gathering for Breaking of Bread at the Lord's table? Are they desirous of the heavenly plan to be brought about through the group? Do they want to be governed by their own doctrinal fancies? If they are sincere in seeking the Lord's direction at all times then accept them as the local church. That at least is the test that we go by.

Question 9

Since you feel that all missionaries should be linked to a church, what practical steps would you recommend to bring this about?

Answer:

But I have never said that. I have only expressed that those desirous to follow God's plan should do so. This would not include all missionaries. Surely it is as God speaks to us as individuals that we recognize that we must come into God's plan. You cannot impose it upon anyone; nor is it something you come into by human wisdom and reasoning. As you begin to labour together you will become convinced that God's order is the Church. Such a step should never be taken by recommendation. It must come from the Lord to the individual himself.

Question 10

In some measure missionaries have had Bible preparation and experience of the Lord's working. Ought they to be under the control of a brother or elder who is likely to be less mature, such as you would find in the smaller assemblies?

Answer:

It is not a matter of control—it is perhaps the wrong word to use. Spiritually we aim to co-operate with each other on the fellowship basis—seeking the fellowship of each and every believer. We recognize only one control as God's servants, and that is God's control. We are not under man's control. If there are church elders I respect them as elders, whether they are literate or illiterate, mature or less mature. I accept them as God's servants and on that principle I seek their fellowship. To us this is of great value—mutual dependence and respect but not control. Now if you feel that God has not given you this guidance or that pattern, just wait. There is no need to be impatient.

My experience is that elders do not force their ways and ideas upon us. Once we recognize that they are called of God to be elders, it is a joy and privilege to have fellowship with them and to work with them.

Question 11

In WEC we have a system whereby candidates are tested and accepted as suitable for missionary work. There is also a further two years of probation on the field. After that they are given full liberty to determine, and to engage in the ministry as the Spirit leads in fellowship with the other field members. What plan do you have for full-time workers for their acceptance and recognition?

Answer:

Of course we have no plan. Those who come to us as co-workers stay with us for one year, and some for ten years and some for less. We have no fixed period. We continue to invite them and whenever we find that they are mature and ready and can be trusted to fulfil a ministry we recognize God's call upon them.

Some go away for various reasons. We don't force them; rather we leave the initiative with the individual. Those who choose to work with us of their own volition and desire to be tested remain on with us. They engage in open-air work, cottage meetings and evangelistic work and by this means we discover their abilities and individual gifts. We have such a variety of people come to us! Some are simple village people and some are educated and gifted people. Each has to be tested differently to determine his gifts and calling. But as far as you as a group are concerned, I agree you would need to follow some plan.

Question 12

What do you consider to be the heavenly plan for the Church in recognizing the five ministries given to it along with the operation of the nine spiritual gifts. Do you justify

these ministries in the assemblies today?

Answer:

I don't think one should enforce it. The Holy Spirit must be given full charge. When He is working you will find these differing gifts and talents functioning in oneness and unity. We ensure that when there is an issue of any kind the Holy Spirit is in charge.

In the second place, we are not bound by any method. In fact, often we have a new plan for every gathering. When the Spirit is working why not let Him work? If we find anything disorderly happening we stop it straight away. We believe that when the Holy Spirit is in charge He manifests Himself in many ways in the way He chooses- sometimes through all the gifts, sometimes through only a few. But we do not insist that He must do things in a certain way, or in the same way.

We are generally cautious of any special manifestation of gift. We have to discern whether it is from God or from the devil, otherwise we are apt to be deceived by man's testimony. So we apply every test and when we find there is an inward peace, order, unity and oneness, then we accept it as a manifestation from God.